



## Annual Report 2014-2015



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## A note from our President

Titus Shecapio

As the new President of the Cree Tourism and Outfitting Association (COTA), I would like to introduce myself and share some highlights from the past year. My involvement with COTA first began in 2008 when I was elected to the Board of Directors as the representative for Mistissini. I have served on the Executive Committee for the past 4 years and as EIT's Vice-President for 3 years. My extensive experience with the association has facilitated the transition to my role as its President. We continue to set high standards and goals for COTA, and, while we will surely encounter challenges along the way, I am pleased by the course we are following. In fact, I firmly believe that we have built a solid foundation for the continued development of a sustainable, economically sound, and competitive tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee. I look forward to contributing my own outlook and ideas.

Since we are focused on the future, we must continue our efforts to promote tourism to Cree youths as a stimulating and rewarding career choice. To this end, COTA, in collaboration with Aboriginal Tourism Québec and Québec Human Resource Council, produced and directed a two-minute video titled "Why Choose Tourism." The video highlights the many exciting and varied job opportunities available in the tourism industry. The video was launched at the International Aboriginal Tourism Conference held this past March in Québec City.

Our focus on the future does not mean we should lose sight of our past. In other words, we value both our youths and our Elders. Our Elders remain our strongest link to our traditions, and our youths our best hope for carrying them forward. Traditional knowledge remains crucial to our development, and our Elders' experience is a priceless benefit for our communities. That is why we are very pleased to welcome Cree elders Janie and Roderick Pachano as honorary Board members. Their insights and council over the past several months have been of great value, and we look forward to their continued contribution.

I would like to close by thanking our outgoing Board of Directors and extending a warm welcome our newest Board members. I would also like to thank our former President Julie-Ann Cooper and wish her the best of success in her future endeavours.

We have a busy and exciting year ahead. With the encouragement and continued support and dedication of our members and staff, I am confident it will be a productive and enriching one.

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## A note from our Executive Director

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Robin McGinley

In my tenure, I have witnessed both considerable change and growth. With so many critical initiatives under way—including, in particular, the Destination Management Company, Air Access Master Plan, and Tourism Entrepreneur Coaching—we are poised to take the next big step toward a truly viable and sustainable tourism industry. With the foundation securely in place, the time is right to transform our tourism vision into reality.

Since COTA's incorporation in December 2000, we have turned visions into ideas, ideas into plans, and plans into strategies. Now it is time to turn strategies into marketable tourism products that meet and exceed the expectations of visitors to the region. Working in close collaboration with tourism entrepreneurs, community representatives and tourism advisors most notably Arctic Kingdom, we are well positioned to take this next critical step.

Arctic Kingdom has over fifteen years of practical experience in the development of sustainable tourism products in remote and northern destinations. It has the vital know-how needed to enable us to achieve the next stage of tourism development. With the Tourism Development and Positioning Plan now complete and the Regional Development Action Plan well underway, we are actively engaged in the first stage of the coastal development project.

Working with Arctic Kingdom we will develop a broad range of cultural and adventure travel options and create a targeted market approach for each.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Jean Chartier all the best in his future endeavours. In his capacity as Director General of Tourisme Baie-James (TBJ) for the past 11 years, he has helped position Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a world-class tourism destination. In 2007, he played an instrumental role in the establishment of Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) as Quebec's twenty-second Regional Tourism Association. With his encouragement and support EIT and TBJ have forged a mutually beneficial partnership that we are confident will continue to grow.

I look forward to working with Titus Shecapio as the new President of COTA. I would also like to thank our members, staff, and board of directors for their support and dedication. I look forward to another exciting and productive year.







## About COTA History

*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).*

### James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

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.

# Objectives

## Implement Section 28.6 of the JBNQA

- 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.



## Board of Directors

The COTA Board is comprised of ten members who serve a 3-year term. One Board member is appointed by the Cree Nation Government (CNG). The remaining nine are elected by the COTA membership.

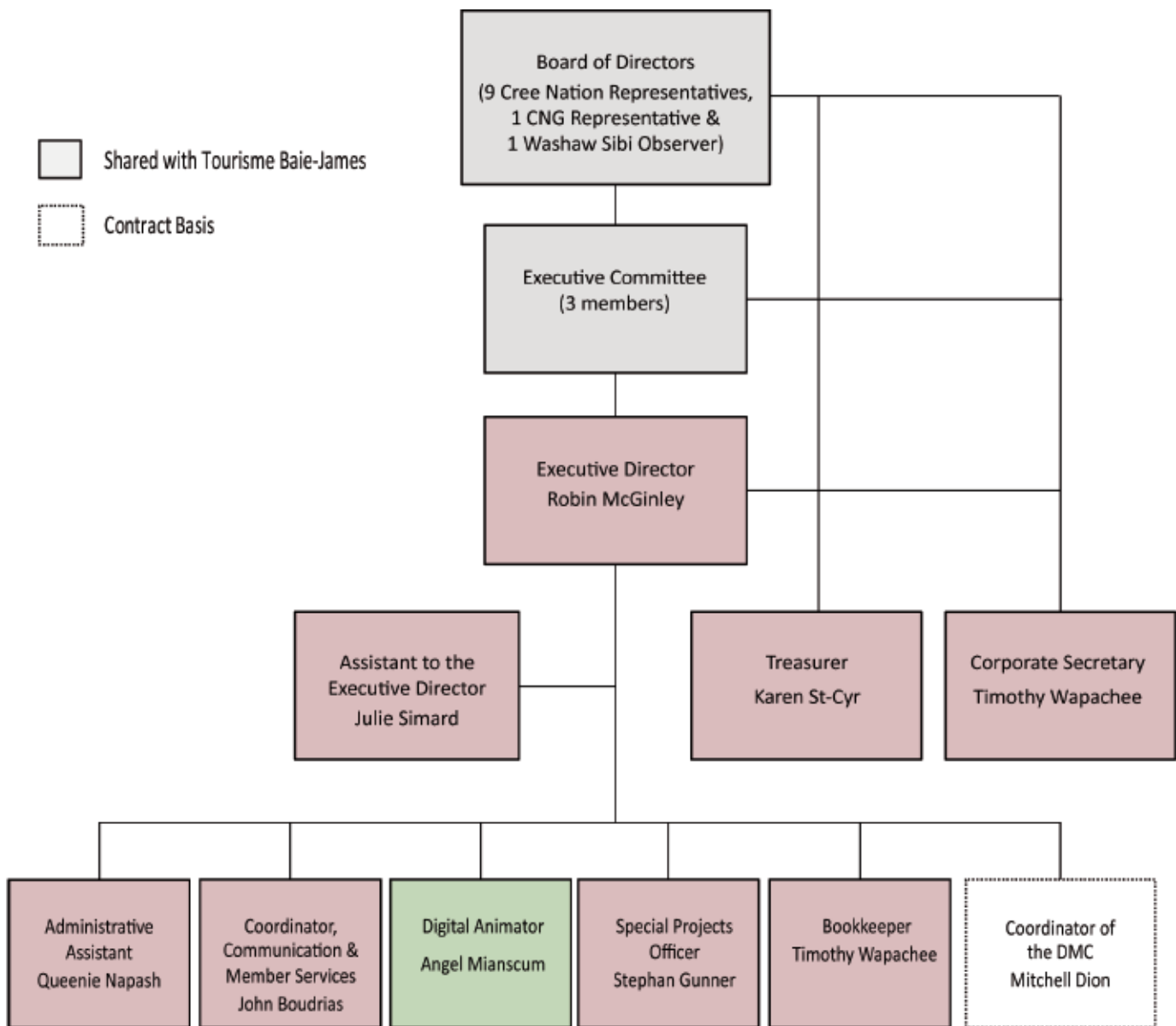


Pictured from left to right: Fred Wapachee, Anderson Jolly, Joey Blacksmith, Titus Shecapio, Raymond Blackned, Sherman Herodier, Anna Bosum, Jamie Moses, Janie Pachano, Isaac Masty

Missing from the photo Dianne O. Reid and Johnny Mark

# Organizational Chart

The chart below illustrates COTA's organizational structure to April 1, 2015





## 2014-2015 Project Summaries

*Following are brief summaries of the projects and initiatives that were undertaken and/or launched in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.*

### 1. Destination Management Company

Working in partnership, COTA and TBJ are laying the groundwork for the establishment of a fully licensed Destination Management Company (DMC). Its mandate will be to market and promote Eeyou Istchee Baie-James and develop and sell travel packages.

Currently the DMC is in the pre-commercialization phase. Last year the primary objectives of this phase were to:

- determine the most effective means of marketing regional tourism products
- identify potential customers
- define the DMC's operating structure

This year, the focus has been to conduct a needs analysis and develop strategies to implement effective tools for marketing the region as a whole as well as provide a meaningful support system for individual tourism-related businesses.

**With the development of the DMC, COTA fulfils its obligation to provide marketing, booking and promotion services for Cree tourism operations.**

To this end, 46 interviews were conducted with tourism representatives from each of the Cree communities and throughout the James Bay region. A preliminary report summarizing the findings was completed in December 2014. This project is ongoing and will be completed in

November 2015 with the submission of a final report that meets the following objectives:

- Identify the actual and potential tourism products
- Conceptualize packages according to the types of products offered to local and foreign tourists alike
- Propose an administrative structure for the DMC travel agency
- Provide estimates including different sources of income and expenses
- Design and sign protocol agreements with various tourism businesses to make the DMC the regional supplier of sales and marketing services
- Determine the promotional and transactional tools needed for the DMC's operations and growth
- Propose software to regional hotel operators to structure strategic data and information collection on the tourism clients
- Produce the DMC implementation's business plan
- Collaborate with product development officers to determine initiatives needed to develop the tourism offer
- Establish guidelines to measure if the objectives of the agency are being met

Additionally, in June 2014, Mitchell Dion was hired as the DMC project coordinator.

The initiative is made possible by funding from the ACCORD program, Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations, Tourisme Québec, and Tourisme Baie-James.



## 2. Specialized Training Programs

This year, COTA provided three specialized training programs. Each program was selected to meet a specific need within the context of outdoor and adventure tourism. Successful participants of each program receive formal certification. The programs, described below, were funded by the Cree Human Resource Department and COTA.

Guide certification and ultimately accreditation by Adventure Ecotourism Quebec brings us that much closer to reaching our goal of offering market ready tourism products.

### 2.1 Advanced Wilderness and Remote First Aid

Offered by a certified Red Cross instructor, the Canadian Advanced Wilderness and Remote First-Aid Course is appropriate for Cree outdoor and adventure tourism businesses that offer remote wilderness excursions. The program offers comprehensive first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques and intensive training for effective response to emergencies in isolated or wilderness settings. The course covers material in Standard First-Aid and CPR as well as advanced strategies for providing extended care for more than 24 hours. In addition, the course covers evacuation and transporting for ill or injured persons, cardiac and respiratory arrest, wound care, head and spine injuries, sudden medical emergencies, and environmental emergencies. The course provides hands-on training; since much of it is set outdoors, participants are expected to be in good physical shape.

Participants who successfully complete the program receive a 3-year certification in Advanced Wilderness and Remote First Aid and CPR Level C.

### 2.2 Canoe Course I and II Calm Water

This 3-day comprehensive program focuses on teaching participants basic strokes, equipment selection, and safety. Upon completion of the program, participants will have the required skills to offer guided canoe excursions in calm water in complete safety. In addition

to learning how to operate a canoe properly, skills taught include how to: apply safety rules, propel a canoe in calm water, load, unload, and launch a canoe, empty a swamped canoe, apply preventive measures, recover a swimmer, recover a capsized canoe, and use international signalling.

### 2.3 Swift Water Rescue II

Participants of this 3-day intensive program will graduate from the course having learned critical safety habits and life saving techniques specific to dealing with white water emergencies. The course includes 3 hours of theoretical learning and 21 hours of practical learning. Some of the topics covered include: reading the river, regulations, using a rope bag, intervention principles, and ropes, knots and accessories.

Training for Canoe Course I and II Calm Water and Swift Water Rescue II were provided by Au Canot Volant.



### 3. Air Access for Tourists (phase 2)

Convenient and affordable air access is crucial for the development of a successful tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. Phase 2 of a project designed to provide tourists with air access to the region —the Master Plan for Air Access— is currently under way. The initiative is made possible by funding from the ACCORD program from the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations, Regional Tourism Partnership Agreement Fund, Tourisme Baie-James, Eskan Company, and Air Creebec.

Eeyou Istchee Baie-James has enormous potential for tourism development. Although travel to all but one of our communities is possible by road, convenient and affordable air access is key to developing a successful tourism destination.

Phase 2 focuses primarily on the development of a comprehensive and integrated business plan for creating a main Fixed Base Operation Base camp and two Twin Otter docking facilities at two key locations (in accordance with phase 1 of this initiative). Additionally, the plan will include strategies and specifications to:

- Convert a regional airport into an attractive northern gateway for Eeyou Istchee Baie-James
- Operate an airport for various types of aircraft, including helicopters and jet, turboprop, and float planes
- Develop standard model facilities for sea-plane/bush-plane operations serving remote destinations
- Improve ground services for scheduled air service and corporate charters
- Develop a state-of-the-art summer base for float planes flying under instrument flight rules
- Establish criteria and requirements for efficient and profitable year-round use of leased turbo-prop bush planes

- Provide short-stay or transition facilities and catering services
- Create a base camp to serve as the starting point for wilderness land tours at remote camps

The business plan will include an assessment of environmental impacts and a comprehensive financial framework and budget.



### 4. The Market Development Plan and Positioning & the Regional Development Action Plan

With support from Arctic Kingdom, COTA has developed a comprehensive Market Development Plan and Positioning (MDPP) that clearly identifies the following:

- Traveler types and messaging
- Categories of trips and tourism markets
- Future markets

An important goal of the MDPP is to create packages that will attract tourists by offering unique experiences that combine Cree culture with adventure travel. Also in development is the Regional Development Action Plan (RDAP) which sets out the specific steps required over a three-year period to achieve our priorities, beginning with the most immediate needs.



The RDAP which is well underway includes specific roles and responsibilities along with deliverables and regional planning requirements with respect to training, operations, equipment, and sales and marketing. The Plan will be updated annually on a rolling three-year basis. Annual progress will be evaluated against its objectives.

Successful tourism marketing requires iconic still and video images. A concerted effort must be made to capture the most powerful images and video possible.

Photos of activities like snowshoeing or canoeing must be combined with cultural imagery like mishwaps and stunning scenery and wildlife. Any Eeyou Istchee imagery must convey multiple exceptional elements to compete with parks in closer proximity.

Both the MDPP and RDAP were developed in collaboration with Arctic Kingdom which has more than fifteen years of experience in tourism planning and development. It provides hands-on integrated consulting, development, and management services. For the past decade and a half, it has enabled many tourism businesses, regional organizations, and communities in Northern Canada to develop sustainable market-ready tourism products.

We are confident that Arctic Kingdom's valuable know-how and hands-on approach will help COTA achieve success with its Market Development and Positioning Plan and Regional Development Action Plan.



## 5. Product Development Coaching Program

The Product Development Coaching Program offers eligible participants an opportunity to further their business objectives with the aid of a trained professional and within a structured and supportive environment. The initiative is designed to provide Cree entrepreneurs with support to upgrade and enhance their tourism products and help them create market-ready tourism offerings that are specifically designed to meet the needs of travellers to the region.

Following the success of the initial Product Development Coaching Program, which ended in April 2015, COTA decided to launch a second such initiative. It is now under way. While the Program's objectives remain the same, participating businesses are now required to cover some of the costs: this investment is designed as an incentivizing measure.



The Program —led by new product-development coach Stephen Ashton— provides coaching on business development and implementation with a focus on individual needs. Four Culture/Adventure tourism entrepreneurs have been selected to participate. They are:

- Jerry Rupert, owner of Long Point Tours and Adventures located in Chisasibi
- Christopher and Jane Fireman, owners of Patukami Tourism and Adventures located in Chisasibi

- Richard, Evelyn and Sherry-Anne Petagumskum, owners of Natwakupaw Adventures located in Whapmagoostui
- Shirley, Edna, Sophie and Jimmy Matoush, owners of Nipiichii-Otish Adventures, located in Mistissini

With the support from the coach, participants will submit an initial draft of their business plan in June 2015. The Program continues until July 2016.

We would like to acknowledge the ACCORD program from the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations, and Regional Tourism Partnership Agreement Fund for their generous funding support to the Product Development Coaching Program.

## 6. Caribou and the Cree

As COTA strives to build a world-class, sustainable tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, we continue to rely on our Elders' vast store of knowledge to guide our decision-making and efforts to create ecologically, culturally and environmentally sound tourism products.

For thousands of years, the Cree of Eeyou Istchee have lived in harmony with the land and wildlife. Our relationship to, and dependency on, caribou for sustenance, shelter, and clothing remains an integral part of our culture. With caribou populations in decline, concerns are being raised about the negative impacts of sports-hunting on woodland caribou and the George and Leaf River herds. Other factors such as habitat destruction due to mining, forestry, and hydroelectric development are also considered to have an adverse effect on caribou populations.

In an effort to identify, catalogue, and, ultimately, mitigate potentially negative impacts on caribou populations, a series of interviews were conducted with 24 Cree Elders each of whom was documented in a report titled Caribou and the Cree.

The observations contained in this comprehensive report are the result of years of experience and in-depth traditional knowledge. They provide a better understanding of the issues at hand. From both

historical and scientific perspectives, the report documents:

- Traditional Cree knowledge about caribou
- The impact of the commercial caribou hunt in Eeyou Istchee
- Common infractions by non-native sports-hunters of provincial rules and regulations as well as disregard for traditional practices
- Recommendations on potential caribou-related tourism activities, such as a wildlife safari

COTA would like to thank Janie Pachano for her hard work and commitment in creating this report. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the many Elders who shared their stories and knowledge. We are confident that the information contained in this report will provide the basis for further discussion and help develop strategies for a more sustainable approach to developing eco- and adventure-tourism packages.

This initiative was funded entirely by COTA



## 7. International Aboriginal Tourism Conference

COTA is pleased to have had the opportunity to attend the fourth annual International Aboriginal Tourism Conference (IATC), which was held on March 24 and 25, 2015 in Quebec City. The theme of this year's conference was "Commit to Achieve." The event brought together close to 350 aboriginal tourism representatives, businesses, and organizations from Canada and abroad. The two-day conference addressed themes such as commitment, authenticity, preferred destinations, marketing, best practices in tourism, and more. Forty top speakers and global leaders from the aboriginal tourism industry took part in this major event.

Studying in Tourism and Travel has never been more exciting than experiencing the IATC in Quebec City this year. It was the highlight of my studies. Experiencing the conference was a boost of motivation to further my studies and I am even more excited to learn about Aboriginal tourism around the world. it was an experiences to remember." - Jeremy Neeposh

COTA was pleased to invite eight entrepreneurs from the Tourism Coaching program and three Cree tourism students from Algonquin College to the conference and covered most of the expenses. Conference attendees reported that the event was a valuable learning experience and great opportunity to network.

## 8. Youth Video

With our focus on the future, we will continue to develop strategies to promote tourism to Cree youths as a stimulating and rewarding career choice. To this end, COTA, in collaboration with Aboriginal Tourism Québec and Québec Tourism Human Resource Council, produced and directed a two-minute video titled "Why Choose Tourism." The video highlights the many exciting and varied job opportunities available in the tourism industry. The video was launched at the International Aboriginal Tourism Conference held this past March in Québec City.





## 9. Annual General Meeting and Tourism Conference

The 14th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Tourism Conference was held in Chisasibi from July 29-31 2014.

At the AGM which took place on the 29th of July, in keeping with our standard protocol, the audited financial reports and the minutes from the 2013 AGM were presented for review and approval. Additionally, Arctic Kingdom was invited to give a brief power point presentation focusing on COTA's Market Development Plan and Positioning and Regional Development Action Plan.

An important highlight of this years AGM was the election of the board of directors for both COTA and EIT. The names of the newly elected members can be found on page 8 of this report.

We would like to take this time to thank the following outgoing board members for their service and dedication to COTA/EIT including: President, Julie-Ann Cooper (Waswanipi), Redfern Mark-Stewart (Eastmain), Roberta Georgekish (Wemindji), Joey Fireman (Chisasibi), and Roy Mamianskum (Whapmagoostui).

The executive was elected by the new board at the first board of directors meeting held in mid-September. We welcome COTA's new president Titus Shecapio.

This year at the Tourism Conference, representatives from all ten Cree communities (including Washaw Sibi) exchanged perspectives on tourism in Eeyou Istchee. Presentations were given by many distinguished guest

speakers from the Cree Nation including, Robert Kanatewat, Matthew Mukash, Isaac Masty, Matthew Happyjack, Sherman Herodier, and Conrad Mianscum, a young Cree from Mistissini who recently graduated from a tourism program at the college level.

In keeping with our commitment to hold eco-responsible events, efforts were made to ensure all possible measures were taken to minimize negative environmental impacts. We also organized a community clean-up. To make the clean-up more fun, teams raced to see who could collect the most garbage in the time allotted to them. It was a great way to spread our message while also having fun.

We would like to thank the Cree Nation of Chisasibi for their support and hospitality as the host nation for this years event. Participants were fortunate to have an opportunity to visit to the historic Fort-George, island for the annual Mamoweedow gathering, It was great fun and a truly unforgettable event!

## 10. Training for the New Digital Animator

In 2014 a new position was created, that of Digital Animator. The position which is shared by EIT/COTA and TBJ was filled last year by long-term COTA employee Angel Mianscum. In order to fulfill this role, Angel is receiving on the job training and is currently in the second year of a 3 year training initiative.

Working closely with the Marketing Agent, Membership officers, and DMC staff, Angel will be responsible for:

- Managing the content and programming of the EIT/TBJ promotional web site.
- Maintaining and updating social media platforms and promote Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a distinctive tourism destination

This year the focus of her work has been on the development and enhancement the online presence of the three organizations. Specifically:

- Completing a web audit of all three websites (COTA, TBJ, and Escape Like Never Before) and development of a new Cree Tourism website



- Building social media platforms to increase exposure and generate a member base for Facebook pages
- Mentoring and support in using search engine optimization (SEO) techniques and social media buying practices
- Training on internal marketing and communications, strategic planning, and budgeting

The training is being delivered in Oujé-Bougoumou by Robert J. Palmer Ph.D., Professor Williams School of Business at Bishop's University. Angel Mianscum will be receiving university credits for the training.

Funding was provided by CHRD and COTA

## 11. Collaborations

COTA is pleased to have had the opportunity to collaborate and/or provide financial support for the following projects.

### 11.1 Aschii Nipii, an Audio Journey

"Aschii Nipii, an audio journey" is an online application that offers travellers an opportunity to learn about Cree history and culture as they travel to Eeyou Istchee along the historic and scenic James Bay Highway. The audio tour is divided into the six Cree seasons and six historical periods. Themes include:

- "Around the Fire," which highlights Cree storytelling and music
- Cree history
- "Alive," which focuses on wildlife and natural phenomena
- "Know-how," which describes Cree traditional knowledge

Through this audio journey, visitors to the region will gain a more in-depth understanding of Cree culture, history, and traditions.

The audio tour is developed by FaunENord.

### 11.2 Responsible Fishermen for Sustainable Sport Fishing

Sport fishing continues to be an important tourism driver in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. Adding to the appeal, a number of popular fishing derbies take place annually in the Cree and Jamesian communities. The largest of these fishing derbies attracts up to 5000 fishing enthusiasts annually. While these events help fuel the tourism economy, they also have a significant environmental impact. As part of COTA's mandate to promote sustainable tourism practices, we support FaunENord's initiative to raise awareness about the importance of engaging in environmentally sound fishing practices. Some of the campaign objectives include:

- Raising awareness among fishermen about the importance of cleaning boats to prevent the introduction of invasive species and pollutants in our waterways;
- Reducing the appearance of blue-green algae blooms following the events caused by human activities;
- Promoting catch and release; and
- Installation of permanent information panels at every derby site.

A longer term goal includes erecting a permanent boat cleaning station at key entry points to the region.





### 11.3 Promoting Northern Quebec's Regional Fare

COTA enjoyed the opportunity to support FaunENord's initiative titled *La mise en valeur du terroir Nord-Québécois: un cachet d'authenticité et de régionalité pour l'industrie touristique*. The initiative is designed to create an innovative culinary product for the regional tourism industry that can be served in restaurants or purchased at local stores and tourism facilities.

The product that was created is a matsutaké-mushroom snowberry spread. The spread was served as a side-dish during the 2013 edition of Festival des ressources naturelles in Chibougamau and was very well received.

Country food is an integral part of Cree culture, and while “culinary tourism” is not part of our current mandate, creating opportunities for tourists to enjoy traditional foods enhances their overall travel experience and creates a stronger link to our culture.

FaunENord is now looking at ways to produce and package the spread on a larger scale with a longer-term objective of marketing and selling this local gastronomic delight throughout Quebec.

### 11.4 Cree Culture Experience Kits

As part of its mandate to promote Cree culture and traditions through tourism and related activities, COTA is working with the *Aanischaaukamikw* Cree Cultural Institute in support of their proposed initiative to develop Cree Culture Experience Kits. The Kits are designed to enhance visitor experience while highlighting selected aspects of Cree history and cultural tradition.

The project is divided into two distinct phases. Phase 1, the research phase, consists of consultations with local Cree artisans and tourism organizations. In phase 2, the information gathered in the initial phase will be used to develop two prototype presentation on traditional clothing and traditional tools. The prototypes will be tested to evaluate user experience.

### 11.5 Rupert River Book

COTA was pleased to provide financial support for the development of the book titled *The Rupert River: A Highway and Homeland*. This coffee table format book will share stories and traditional knowledge of Cree elders and will provide a historical and scientific context for the findings of the SEBJ's archaeological program. The book, being developed by the Cree Nation Government has an anticipated release date of summer 2015.

