



# 2022-2023

# Annual Report



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**Anderson P. Jolly**

## A Message from our President

As COTA's new President, I would like to introduce myself and share my optimism about Indigenous Tourism for the year ahead. My involvement with COTA began about a decade ago when I was elected to the board of directors as the Nemaska representative. The experience I gained as a long-time board member certainly eased my transition to the position of president, in which I look forward to contributing my own outlook and ideas.

As you know, the tourism industry was hit hard by the pandemic. With the long and complete shutdown of Eeyou Istchee to visitors, Cree tourism businesses were profoundly affected. Despite this setback and its lingering effects, I remain optimistic about our industry's future and its ability to develop in line with tourists' increasing interest in genuine and immersive experiences of the kind that Indigenous tourism can offer.

As recent statistics compiled by Indigenous Tourism Quebec show, 89% of Quebecers are interested in taking part in Indigenous activities such as attending a powwow, festival or performance, going on a nature adventure or excursion, and taking part in arts and crafts workshops. Projects such as the Cree Knowledge Festival, Ecotourism in Protected Areas, and Creetopia, to name just a few, are all well positioned to meet this demand.

We've built a solid foundation for a sustainable, economically sound, and competitive tourism industry, and our resilience and willingness to adapt and innovate is stronger than ever. Thanks in part to initiatives such as *Shipeku*, an innovative program designed to foster sustainability among Indigenous tourism businesses, we are moving ever closer to establishing our tourism industry as a leader in sustainable tourism practices.

We've come a long way in the last 20 years and while we still have much to do, we have reason to be proud of the progress we've made. I am honoured to have the support and confidence of the board of directors and our members, and I will continue to help guide the Cree tourism industry toward a strong and sustainable future.

I would like to end by thanking COTA's outgoing President, Titus Shecapio. It was both a pleasure and a privilege to work with him over the years and I wish him well in all his future endeavours.





**Robin McGinley**

## A Message from our Executive Director

Over the years, with our members' support and commitment, COTA has made great strides toward an authentic and sustainable tourism industry that helps grow our economy and showcase our culture worldwide.

We are privileged to work alongside the many dedicated individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout our regional tourism industry that have worked so hard to overcome the negative effects of the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate Nibiischii Corporation for its leadership role in the development of sustainable Cree tourism.

In 2022, Nibiischii Corporation celebrated not only the fifth anniversary of its successful management of the Assinica and the Albanel-Mistassini-and-Waconichi Lakes Wildlife Reserves but also, its selection as one of three finalists in the 2022 Indigenous Tourism Awards and one of five finalists in the innovation and development category in the 2022 Tourism Excellence Prizes awarded by Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec.

As COTA is a member-driven association, delivering training initiatives and professional services is critical to what we do. Nibiischii Corporation's well-deserved recognition is a tremendous achievement, and we were pleased to assist them in preparing and submitting their applications for these prestigious awards.

We pledge to pursue efforts to identify the challenges our industry faces and, in collaboration with the communities we serve, find creative solutions. This past year, for example, COTA began implementing the project, Innovative Technology Solutions for Hotels. This initiative will ensure that hotel operators meet current industry standards and will enhance their market readiness by improving the client experience. Additionally, self-check-in kiosks will help streamline operations and provide contingency when hotel staff is not readily available to meet arriving guests.

In closing, I would like to thank Titus Shecapio. In his nine years as COTA's president, he was instrumental in shaping and directing Eeyou Istchee's tourism industry. We look forward to working with him in his new role as Director General of Mistissini.



# About COTA

## Our History

The Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association was incorporated on December 7, 2000 as a non-profit corporation under Part II of the Canadian Corporations Act. Since our incorporation we've been active in the development of the tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee. By promoting tourism, we're helping to transform our region's vast potential for economic, employment, and other growth opportunities.

### James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA)

The negotiations leading to the JBNQA provided the platform for gaining control over tourism development. With the signing of the Final Agreement in 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.



Photo credit: Frederic Laroche

### 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:

- ❖ Cree Trappers' Association;
- ❖ Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association;
- ❖ 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:

- ❖ Provide marketing, booking and promotion services for Cree outfitting operations;
- ❖ Provide business, management, accounting and professional services for Cree outfitters;
- ❖ 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.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to develop and implement a collective vision for a world-class sustainable tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee that is in harmony with Cree culture and values and that involves a partnership with Cree communities, institutions, and businesses.

## Our 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.

### 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.

### Communications

- ❖ Ensure effective communications with Cree stake-holders 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.

### Financial Development

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

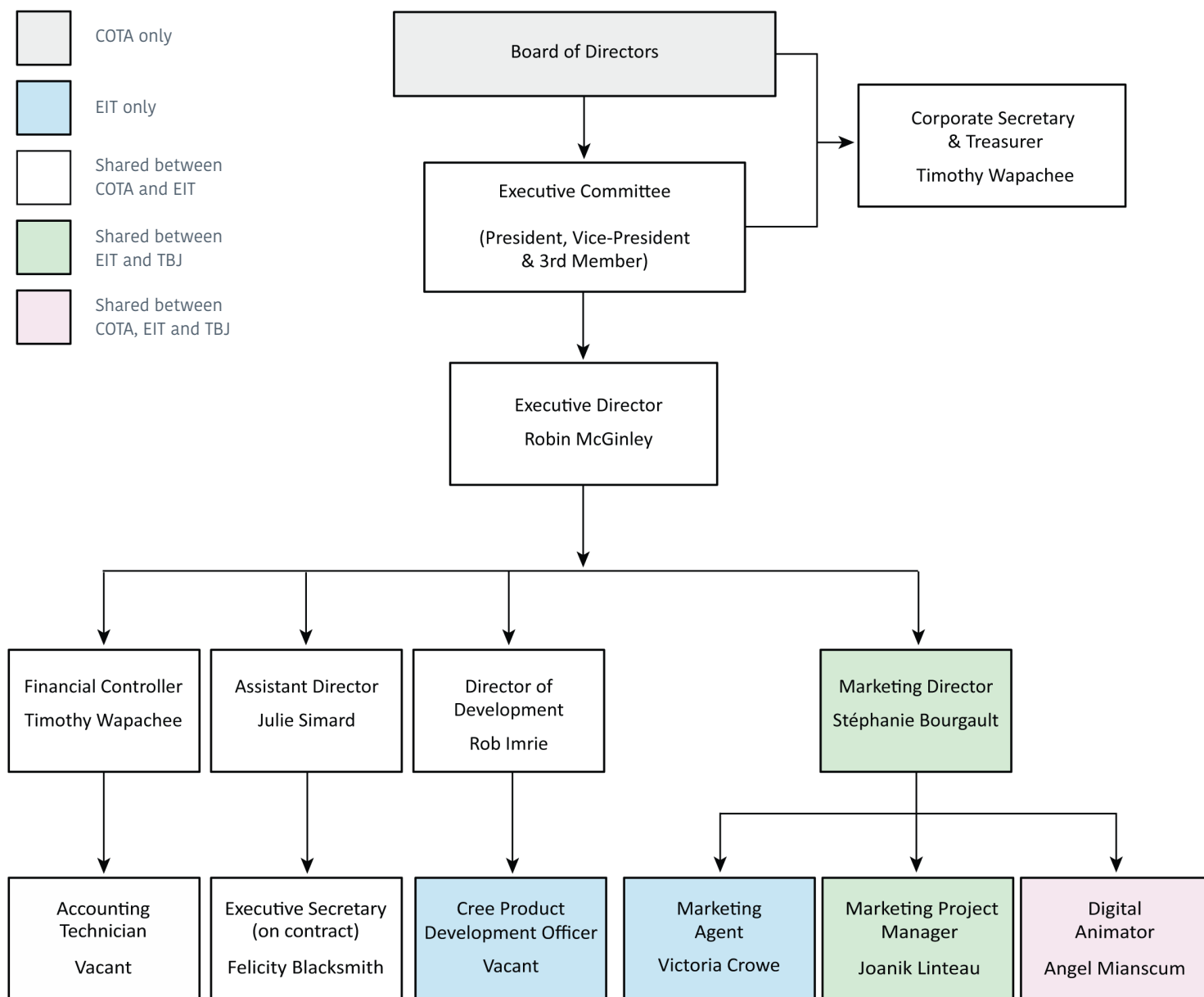


Photo credit: Annie Claude Roberge



# Organizational Chart

The chart below illustrates COTA and EIT's organizational structure to March 31, 2023



## COTA Executive Committee

Anderson P. Jolly – President (Nemaska)  
Edward Bearskin – Vice-President (Chisasibi)  
Irene Otter – Executive Member (Waswanipi)

## EIT Executive Committee

Edward Bearskin – President (Chisasibi)  
Irene Otter – Vice-President (Waswanipi)  
Stanley Shashaweskum - Executive Member (Wemindji)

## COTA Board of Directors

Ron Simard (Oujé-Bougoumou), Gilbert Baribeau (Mistissini), Stacy Bear (Waskaganish), Elvis Weapenicappo (Eastmain), Isaac Masty (Whapmagoostui), Johnny Saganash and Louisa B. Saganash (Elders Committee Representatives), Alexander Moses (Cree Nation Government Representative)

# Our Year in Review 2022-2023

## 1. COTA Projects and Events

### 1.1 Annual General Meeting and Tourism Conference

We are pleased to report that the 2022 Annual General Meeting and Tourism Conference was a great success. After holding the event online for the past two years – due, of course, to the COVID pandemic – it was both thrilling and invigorating to get together once again in person. After all, being in the same room is more conducive to effective collaboration.

There was no mistaking attendees' enthusiasm, positive attitude, and high energy level. Everyone in attendance shared the same strong commitment to giving our tourism industry a much-needed boost.

The theme of this year's event was "Culinary Tourism in Eeyou Istchee: A World of Flavours." Participants were able to attend several informative presentations about this fast-growing segment of the tourism industry. In addition, there were two workshops one was devoted to the culinary arts "Defining Cree Culinary Identity" and the other dealt with the practical and important issue of pricing: "How to Price your Tourism Experience and Make it Profitable."

The presentation topics were both diverse and captivating. Another highlight was a virtual presentation by Irene Neeposh, who is the owner of Ungava Gourmet. Her products, which are sold both online and in select markets, are sustainably harvested and made primarily from regional flora, such as Labrador tea and creeping snowberries.

Participants also learned more about the potential of harvesting non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as mushrooms, berries, and even tree bark. These ingredients are used by local chefs to create regional dishes.

We look forward to next year's event, which will be held from November 6 to 8, 2023 in Whapmagoostui.



The Annual General Meeting and Tourism Conference provided an opportunity to gather socially at our "mocktail" party, where we were treated to signature mocktails and small plates of delicacies prepared by local Cree and Jamesian chefs. During the evening festivities, we celebrated staff anniversaries, including Executive Director Robin McGinley's twenty years of service and dedication to Cree tourism development.

## 1.2 Virtual Cree Knowledge Festival

In March of this year, COTA, in partnership with the Cree Native Arts and Craft Association and Cree Trappers' Association, was proud to host the first-ever Virtual Cree Knowledge Festival, which was broadcast live from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi. Thanks to the commitment and support of all involved, this engaging multi-disciplinary event was a resounding success.

The Festival not only enabled Cree artists and performers to showcase their talent: it also served to share and illuminate Cree culture, history, and teachings to the rest of the world.

The virtual event featured traditional Cree storytelling, musical performances, and panel discussions with Elders and Cree leaders. Musical guests included Cree Rising, a group from Chisasibi, and fiddle player Jayden Ratt.

An estimated 1,900 people tuned in to watch the live events while the promotional videos reached well over 200,000 people on social media.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the Cree Nation of Chisasibi for their invaluable help with all aspects of the event including set design, audio production, and catering. We would also like to thank the hosts of this year's event, Christopher Herodier and Lori-Jane Pepabano as well as the production company Webdiffusion for its professionalism.

The Cree Knowledge Festival can be viewed online by visiting: [www.cree-festival-cri.com](http://www.cree-festival-cri.com)

Funding for this initiative was generously provided by the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, Cree Nation Government, and Indigenous Tourism Québec.



Photo credit: Jessica Otter



Photo credit: Jessica Otter

“As Chief of the host community, I am honoured to have participated in the first-ever virtual Cree Knowledge Festival. The organizers did an incredible job showcasing an array of Eeyou panellists, artists, singers, and Elders, giving viewers a small taste of Eeyou Istchee. As there is so much more to explore, we hope this festival encourages mandowch (visitors) to travel to our paradise in the North and experience our land — which to us, is medicine for the mind, body, and soul.”

Chief Daisy House of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi

### 1.3 Best Practices Tour: Marine Ecotourism

Over the past several years, we have made considerable progress, in cooperation with Wiinipaakw Tours Solidarity Cooperation (WTSC), in developing viable and sustainable marine tourism in Eeyou Istchee in accordance with authentic Cree culture and values and in harmony with nature.



Photo credit: COTA

Marine tourism in Eeyou Istchee has the potential of providing visitors with various opportunities to enjoy immersive and memorable experiences, including wildlife-observation tours, visits to sites of historical interest, and travel to coastal settings such as Charlton Island where they can take part in traditional activities.

To ensure the success of marine tourism as an evolving industry, we first need to ensure that marine captains have the required knowledge and expertise to engage with tourists, captivate their interest through effective communications and be proud ambassadors for the region and the marine environment.

In many ways, tour guides define product quality. They may draw tourists toward or turn them away from sustainable practices and contribute significantly to the success or failure of tourism experiences. Through their interpretation services, professional guides add value to the tourism product and greatly enhance visitor experiences.

Accordingly, the week-long Best Practices Tour, which took place in June 2022, was designed to:

- ❖ Showcase activities and attractions relating both to ecotourism and marine tourism along the St. Lawrence River
- ❖ Enable participants to take part in wildlife-observation tours and visit sites of interest to experience how interpretation provided by guides creates and shapes the tourist experience
- ❖ Gain a better understanding tourists' needs and expectations by playing the role of tourist
- ❖ Create opportunities to network with various tourism stakeholders in the marine tourism sector

During the Best Practices Tour, participants also took part in a presentation by l'Alliance Éco-Baleine that focused on cruise operations and eco-responsible practices.

We would like to thank Indigenous Tourism Québec for their generous funding.



Photo credit: COTA

#### 1.4. Sustainable NTFP Project to Increase the Quality of the Visitors Experience

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) refer to products other than timber that are naturally produced in forests and can be harvested for human use without cutting down trees.

With an abundance of pine and spruce forests, peat bogs, rivers and lakes, the region boasts a rich biodiversity offering enormous potential for developing NTFPs.

As part of its mandate, FaunENord was given the contract to coordinate this project and work with the communities to conduct a field inventory of non-timber forest products found in and around the participating communities.

Based on our findings, we will evaluate how to use NTFPs to expand our region's tourism offerings and enhance visitor experiences in a variety of ways. For example, we will encourage local restaurants to create menus that include meals prepared with ingredients sourced from sustainably harvested NTFPs, including mushrooms, berries, and tree bark.

Additionally, we will offer training to Cree tourism officers and local tourism guides on NTFPs found in their community to enable them to create visitor experiences that encompass forest exploration and learning about NTFPs in the boreal forest.

This project is made possible thanks to funding from the Government of Canada – ISC

Once complete, the field inventories will reflect the availability of resources in each community enabling local businesses and entrepreneurs to better evaluate how to incorporate NTFPs into their business model and tourism activities.



Photo credit: Mitchell Dion

## 1.5. Cree Conversation Class

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In response to Bill 1: An Act respecting the Cree language of Eeyou Istchee designed to support and promote the use of the Cree language, COTA launched a weekly Cree conversation course.

The course consisted of 45-minute online lessons and was available to the COTA team as well as staff from our partner organizations, EIT and Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Travel. Presentations, including audio clips, are on file to review and practice.

Initially designed as a pilot project, the Cree conversation course was funded by COTA and began in November 2022. It was offered for a period of eight weeks. The weekly classes were well attended, and the response overall was very positive.

Participants in the Cree conversation course learned:

- ❖ Basic Cree words
- ❖ Various ways of using Cree words
- ❖ How to introduce themselves in Cree
- ❖ How to introduce their organization in Cree
- ❖ Greetings and introductions
- ❖ To engage in basic conversation

Also included was a “Word of the Week” feature with definitions and usages.

Given the course’s success and positive response from participants, COTA plans to seek further funding to pursue this popular initiative.

## 1.6. Promoting Ecotourism in Protected Areas

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Sustainable tourism can take many forms, including protecting certain areas from industrial development and reserving their use for ecotourism activities. Promoting ecotourism in protected areas in Eeyou Istchee can be key to developing a sustainable green economy while preserving biodiversity.

With plans to develop ecotourism in protected areas currently underway in Eeyou Istchee, beginning in 2020 and continuing through 2023, COTA conducted a series of consultations with tourism officers and tallymen representing each community. As a result of these consultations, while it was determined that there was a keen interest in developing ecotourism activities in protected areas, there was also a lack of information available to guide the process.

To bridge this gap, COTA has created a how-to guide entitled Guide to Cree-Led Ecotourism Development in Protected Areas that is specifically designed for individuals wishing to use such development to benefit the natural and cultural heritage of conservation areas.

The objectives of the guide, which includes both a workbook and a resource section, are two-fold, namely, to:

- ❖ Help users define the most critical aspects of their ecotourism project
- ❖ Direct users to the information and resources they need to launch an ecotourism project in protected areas

We are confident this guide will provide the information needed to support the responsible and sustainable development of Cree-led ecotourism projects within protected areas.

This project was made possible thanks to funding provided by Canada Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge fund along with additional funding by philanthropic foundations and the Québec Government, administered by the Cree Nation Government.



Photo credit: Mathieu Dupuis

## 1.7. Translation of Cree Capsules

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In summer 2021, a special project was undertaken to create a series of video capsules designed to highlight Cree language and culture. Accordingly, a number of artists and knowledge-keepers from across Eeyou Istchee were interviewed. The interviews were recorded on video, and they are now being translated and will include subtitles in French and English.

David and Anna Bosum, Stanley and Conrad Mianscum, Ella Neeposh, Johnny and Louisa Saganash and Charlie Ottereyes are among the interviewees who graciously agreed to take part in this project – in recognition of the importance of sharing our culture, preserving a vibrant record of our elders’ teachings, and helping Cree youths reconnect with their roots and traditions.

As a tribute to the importance of this video record, a selection of interviews was featured at the virtual Cree Knowledge Festival that took place in 2022.

The videos will be available online, including various social-media platforms.

We would like to thank the Cree Nation Government and Cree Solidarity Alliance for providing funding for this endeavour.

## 1.8. Digital Filing

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This project is designed to update and streamline COTA’s internal communications and electronic filing operations. Its main goals are to:

- ❖ Develop a filing system based on key information-storage requirements and corporate and accounting business needs
- ❖ Create a robust and streamlined filing system that respects COTA’s regulatory requirements
- ❖ Develop an archival system for properly naming and storing files
- ❖ Support the transfer of all existing files to the new system
- ❖ Develop a plan to transition from physical files to digital files
- ❖ Train current COTA staff on appropriate system use and maintenance
- ❖ Allow for additional training opportunities and the ability to transfer the technology to other organizations, such as Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Travel and Wiinipaakw Tours Solidary Coop

This project is made possible thanks to funding from Apatisiwin Skills Development.

## 1.9. Innovative Technology Solutions for Hotels

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As part of this project, innovative technology is being deployed across Eeyou Istchee’s hotel industry to enable it to streamline and standardize its services and enhance its amenities, including easy booking, quicker hotel check-in, key less lock entry, and access to high-quality vending machines.

The project aims to:

- ❖ Improve customer service and boost guest convenience
- ❖ Generate additional sales for local suppliers wherever possible
- ❖ Facilitate daily operations and relieve stress on existing staff
- ❖ Mitigate employee turnover at a time workforce shortage
- ❖ Improve sustainability ratings
- ❖ Help hotel operators meet current industry standards and improve their market readiness

Phase 1 of this initiative was the purchase of the following technology and equipment:

- ❖ Self-check-in kiosks, with options for walk-in, ID verification, and credit-card payment
- ❖ Smart-lock systems for key less entry
- ❖ Energy-star vending machines with cold/frozen combo
- ❖ Energy-star industrial freezers for inventory
- ❖ In-room conveniences such as microwaves, energy-efficient refrigerators, and new coffee machines

Phase 2 of this project consists in the installation of the new technology and includes training and support for hotel staff and management.

The project’s standardized, comprehensive, innovative, eco-friendly, and user-friendly solutions contribute to making our destination a welcoming and reliable option for travellers. This initiative is made possible through the financial support of Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions.

Self-check-in kiosks deliver many benefits both to hotel operators and their guests. These kiosks check guests in and out easily and efficiently and they also issue key cards, thereby freeing up employees to achieve other tasks.



Photo credit: Mathieu Dupuis

## 1.10. Geopark

In 2021, working in partnership with Tourisme Baie-James, a feasibility study was launched to assess the potential for creating a UNESCO Global Geopark in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James.

The location of the Geopark will be selected for its geological significance and to showcase our geomorphological history and features. We are currently looking at the inland area including Mistissini, Uujé-Bougoumou, Chibougamau and Chapais. The Geopark may also include ways to enhance visitors' experience through multimedia presentations, immersive interactive displays, and virtual reality.

Why is this an opportunity for us?

The Geopark would be the common thread for the global tourism strategy as it:

- ❖ Facilitates tourism mobility in the region
- ❖ Positions EIBJ favourably on international markets
- ❖ Focuses our position as a destination with outstanding natural settings and attractions, including in the field of earth sciences and research

Due to delays resulting from COVID-19-related restrictions, the project is ongoing, and the completion of the feasibility study has been extended to December 2023.

This project is made possible thanks to funding from Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Geoparks are established to protect and make use of geological heritage in a sustainable way, thereby promoting the economic well-being of the people who live close to them. Geoparks offer countless opportunities for exploring, learning about, showcasing, and preserving unique natural heritage. Developing a Geopark in EIBJ supports high-quality, sustainable tourism that reflects Cree values and enhances residents' economic well-being.



## 2. COTA Training Initiatives

### 2.1. On Water Training

The On-Water Training program was designed to provide marine captains with an opportunity to reinforce their coastal and inland navigation skills.

Topics included:

- ❖ Review of skills learned in the Small Vessel Operations Proficiency training program
- ❖ Advanced positioning techniques
- ❖ Use of chart plotters, radar, depth sounders, and other electronic instruments
- ❖ Hazard-avoidance techniques using electronic devices
- ❖ Collision-avoidance techniques using radar and global positioning systems
- ❖ Working with tides, including knowledge of clearances, depth, and the effects of currents
- ❖ Piloting with winds and currents

We would like to thank Apatisiwin Skills Development for generously supporting this training program.

### 2.2. 2022-2023 Advanced Wilderness First-Aid Training

Advanced Wilderness First-Aid is a forty-hour training program that is considered the standard for professionals who work in remote settings. The course provides participants with a solid foundation in wilderness first-aid, with an emphasis on prevention, practical skills, decision-making, and dealing with environmental conditions.

Topics include group leadership, accident-scene management, rescuer responsibility and liability, prevention of injuries, advanced first-aid kits, treating wounds, and managing the trauma victim.

While it includes some theory, the training program consists mainly of hands-on activities and simulations designed to ensure participants develop the required skills.

The training was offered to captains working in marine tourism to ensure they have required certifications.

We would like to thank Apatisiwin Skills Development for funding this initiative.



Photo credit: Annie-Claude Roberge

### 2.3. Hospitality Awareness for Development Corporation

This training program offers customized online courses to the Board members of the various Cree Corporations that own and/or operate hospitality businesses in their respective communities. The training modules, delivered via Zoom, are an hour in length and include an intensive 30-minute training session followed by an open discussion and question period facilitated by the instructor.

The primary objectives of this training program are to:

- ❖ Inform participants on the unique characteristics of the hospitality industry
- ❖ Help participants understand the importance of their employees' need to acquire professional skills in the field, which, in turn, boosts business performance
- ❖ Endow participants with tools and insights to support employees thereby helping them reach their full potential and achieve success in their respective positions

Some of the topics addressed are:

- ❖ Human resources challenges: how to keep hospitality-industry employees motivated and reduce turnover
- ❖ Pricing strategies and budgeting principles specific to hotels and restaurants
- ❖ Technologies and trends in the hospitality industry
- ❖ Customer experience versus visitors needs

To meet the scheduling needs of participants, the training was extended to March 31, 2023.

This training program is made possible thanks to funding from Apatisiwin Skills Development.

## 2.4. Hospitality Training Creetopia

Creetopia, which is exclusive to Eeyou Istchee, is an innovative product developed in conjunction with Huttoopia, a French company that has created an extremely successful prêt-à-camper (“ready-to-camp”) concept.

The first Creetopia basecamp, which is located at km 48 of the Waskaganish access road, is scheduled to open in the summer of 2023. To ensure the successful launch, a hospitality training program was designed specifically in support of this initiative.

The primary objective of the training program, which is divided into three phases, is to ensure that Creetopia staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to meet three important objectives:

- ❖ Provide the best possible visitor experience
- ❖ Develop and maintain a dynamic Human Resource Management plan
- ❖ Optimize profitability

The training program covers these key topics:

- ❖ Introduction to the Hospitality Business
- ❖ Customer Service in the Hospitality Industry
- ❖ Front Office Operations
- ❖ Housekeeping Operations and COVID-19 Safety Measures
- ❖ Food Service Operations
- ❖ Maintenance & Security (hospitality-related) Operations
- ❖ Managing a Hospitality Business

The training, which has so far been delivered online via Zoom, began on January 25, 2022. The final component, “Managing a Hospitality Business” which is scheduled to take place in June 2023, will be offered in person at the site of the Creetopia basecamp.

Funding for the training was provided in part by Apatisiwin Skills Development.

## 2.5. Creetopia Training Initiative

In 2019, COTA was excited to launch the prototype of the innovative Creetopia “ready-to-camp” tent. With the first Creetopia site set to open in the summer of 2023, the objective was to complete the construction of the inaugural site, which includes the construction of ten tents that will serve as primary accommodations.

To meet this objective, a training initiative was put into place. As a result, a select group of Cree individuals acquired the knowledge and skill sets needed to build Creetopia tents.

Once the training program was complete, participants worked in smaller groups to assemble the first ten tents at km 48 of the Waskaganish access road. With plans in place to build a network of Creetopia sites, creating a workforce with the requisite skills to support the development of future Creetopia camps will serve the project well.

The training was provided by Julien Shurmann of Huttoopia France, who played a key role in developing the tent prototype.

This training initiative was made possible thanks to the generous funding provided by Apatisiwin Skills Development.

