



# MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Commemorative Report*



# MOCREEBEC CELEBRATION

The Indian Act has immersed First Nations leadership in an imposed foreign governance for the past one hundred and thirty years. In light of this today, many people believe that this form of governance is First Nations governance because they have never seen or heard any other form.

An integral part of nation building is the process of selecting our leadership based on First Nations' values and traditions. All of our nations have been given, through creation, a distinct and unique way of governing our peoples. These are generally called responsibilities for which all community people play a role. It calls upon our families and clans for participation so that they can be fully knowledgeable and in control of their future place within the nation.

History has shown that re-building this process requires dedication and perseverance by many people to make their families aware of their roles and how they can resume responsibility and control of their lives.

The MoCreebec people have embarked on the journey when building their community in northern Ontario approximately twenty-five years ago. In their constitutional development, they not only provided for family representation politically in the clan council, but in their economic institutions as well. These

developments are based on the fundamental inherent right to and respect for their governance practices and way of life.

Today, the development is ongoing to support families in their human development dealing with a broad range of social issues that have permeated most of our communities.

One of the many solutions for the people of MoCreebec is their renewed economic spirit with the development of their businesses including an ecolodge. Designed for both employment and sustainability, it is a reminder to themselves of their duty to look after the lands for future generations.

If one could look for a road map out of the malaise created by years of oppression by settler governments, surely one would have to examine the road that the people of MoCreebec have travelled for the past twenty-five years. Not only have I been honoured to work with their community, but I have also benefitted from the time spent with the people of MoCreebec.

Clearly, their vision of their place on the land will come to fruition as they continue to develop and rely on their own ability to create positive change.

Gordon Peters, Former Regional Chief of Ontario

[www.mocreebec.com](http://www.mocreebec.com)

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You will notice that the background of various pages includes a design that you might not be familiar with. The design is comprised of circles that intersect and interact with each other. It represents the model of becoming organized as reflected by the MoCreebec Constitution and how the group function is dependent on each clan becoming involved and being organized.

We consider this a model for rebuilding the Cree Nation.



# MISIWA CHIWAACHEYEMITINWAA

Welcome to this one-time publication. The purpose of this communication at this time is to provide and share information on issues and matters important to our membership.

February 5, 2005, marked the 25th anniversary of MoCreebec as an organization. As a people, we have been around much longer than twenty-five years. This gives us time to reflect and think back on our past as well as look to the future. Many of us can see the changes from the early days with housing and modern conveniences being the most obvious. It wasn't long ago we lived in tents, shacks and modest homes. Now many of us have cable television, computers and the internet.

At the same time, we remember fondly, our loved ones that we all have lost over the years. Many of these people were our guides and inspiration along the way. At this time, it is also important to remember the contribution that our Elders have made and continue to make.

Where are we at as we approach twenty-five years? For starters, we are still here. Many thought, I'm sure, that we would not survive once Grand Council of the Crees stopped giving us the limited financial support back in 1986. Many needs have been met for all of us, but there is still so much more to do.

The big question for MoCreebec is where do we go? Where do you want to see us as a community in twenty-five years from now? While there are many options and as many ways to get there, one thing is for certain; in order to achieve our goals, we have to speak with one voice and maintain unity.

In the past, we have agreed in principle with the idea of a reserve and band status but as our members have said, 'do not forget about our rights under the treaty of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA).' This is why we are challenging Section 3.2.7, a policy of the JBNQA. After too many years of not being heard to dissolve this policy of the "ten year clause" which impacts beneficiaries to access benefits, we have resorted to the last option of a court

challenge to clarify this situation. It is our hope that our right to benefits will be strengthened, such as education and health benefits. Once we know where we stand, we must be ready to move forward.

This means being prepared in the sense of members knowing the issues and being involved. In the mid-nineties, we put in place a constitution — something that we should recognize as an achievement as many First Nation communities have yet to take this step. But it is hard work to organize our community. It is hard work because our constitution puts the responsibilities on each and every one of us to get involved and help to organize our own clan councils.

How will we know when we are achieving our goals for the next twenty-five years? A big part of our future will depend on when each of you decide to take up your responsibilities under our MoCreebec Constitution and to organize your clan. When that is done, there is a place at the decision table waiting for you.

In the past, we have done some work on building capacity, that is our ability to become involved by knowing our Constitution. We have provided some training and leadership development opportunities and we need to do more of this work. Working together in this way is important for our present, but more so for our future.

Finally, if you want to get involved and learn more about the issues that matter to MoCreebec members, I invite you to come in and we can talk more. We all need each other to care and be involved, if we are going to survive into the future.

Mii Kwehch,  
Nii, Randy Kapashesit

February 5, 1980      The MoCreebec Association is created to address issues of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) beneficiaries living in Moose Factory and Moosonee.



Moose Factory circa 1984  
 "Tent City"; where many members of MoCreebec grew up in third world conditions

CPI/Susan Reid

## UPDATE: MoCREEBEC LEGAL CHALLENGE

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) signed by the governments of Canada and Quebec, along with Hydro Quebec and the Grand Council of the Crees, has the status of a treaty and is protected by the Canadian Constitution. For MoCreebec members, it affects our rights and determines how and if we will realize any rights as Aboriginal people within Canada.

MoCreebec is challenging the way Section 3.2.7 of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement is being applied to beneficiaries living in the Moosonee and Moose Factory communities. While we have initiated this court challenge on behalf of thirteen individual members here in Moosonee/Moose Factory, the reality is, this challenge will affect all beneficiaries of the JBNQA.

Section 3.2.7 is stated in the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement as:

*"In the event a person mentioned in paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.6 inclusive of this Sub-Section is absent from the Territory during ten continuous years and is domiciled outside the Territory, such person shall not be entitled to exercise his rights or receive benefits under the Agreement. Upon such person re-establishing his domicile in the Territory, the right of such person to exercise his rights or to receive benefits under the Agreement shall revive."*

In summary, Section 3.2.7 means when the person is not present for ten years and domiciled out of the territory, that person loses their right to benefit. This section is also known

as the ten-year clause which again, affects beneficiary rights and places us on an inactive list.

MoCreebec is seeking a "declaratory judgement" from the Superior Court of Quebec in the court case with the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec. It means not suing for money but clarifying a policy. We are asking the court to clarify and agree with our position that Section 3.2.7 is discriminatory and violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Despite our hope that these proceedings would have moved quickly through the court, this is not happening, but we are determined to seek a resolution. At this stage, all the petitioners have been cross-examined by Grand Council of the Crees, as well as the other parties who are signatories to the JBNQA. We expect to soon receive their defense and will then have a chance to cross-examine their witnesses.

As for when we can expect an outcome from the court, our best guess is at least another year or perhaps two years. Those expressing an interest to be involved in this challenge and have met with Julius Grey, legal counsel for MoCreebec, we will be contacting you when this part of the court proceeding is upon us. We have not forgotten you! We invite further comments and support. In particular, we invite volunteers to assist us in establishing our legal defense fund, and of course financial support. To find out more information, please contact Randy Kapashesit at the MoCreebec office.

MoCreebec Non-Profit Housing Association is incorporated on February 24, 1982. The MoCreebec Association negotiates with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for the delivery of the Rural and Native Housing Program for construction of both homeowner and rental units — eighty (80) units in total — in Moose Factory and Moosonee. To-date, one hundred and one (101) CMHC units have been built and delivered in both communities. Another one-hundred (100) units is constructed under the social housing program with Ontario Ministry of Housing.



# A CHRONOLOGY OF MOCREEBEC'S LEGAL CHALLENGE:

After attending many General Assemblies of the GCCQ/CRA in the 1980s, raising key issues such as Section 3.2.7 and others, MoCreebec decided that a political solution was not possible at that time.

As time went on through the 1990s, we focused on our own survival as an organization without core funding. Then, as the legal environment within Canada began changing, we looked more closely at possible legal strategies. Although we had always hoped to bring a legal strategy forward, it was both possible and practical within the last few years to proceed.

August 2002	Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec/Cree Regional Authority (GCCQ/CRA) election
September 2002	MoCreebec Council responds by letter to GCCQ/CRA
September 2002	Search for Quebec licensed lawyer
October 2002	Special Council Meeting and Teleconference Meeting with MoCreebec Members and Julius Grey of Grey-Casgrain Attorneys in Montreal
January 2003	Julius Grey, legal counsel for MoCreebec, participates with the MoCreebec membership on January 28, 2003, in Moose Factory for the Agreement in Principle (AIP) Presentation by GCCQ
February 2003	Having given thirty days for GCCQ to respond, no response letter is received
February 2003	Authorization is given by MoCreebec Members at a Membership Meeting to proceed with legal challenge
December 2003	MoCreebec files a legal challenge to section 3.2.7. of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) that involves: -motion for Declaration Relief under Article 453 C.P.C. and 24(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms -various examinations, motions, cross-examinations
Winter/Spring 2004	Meetings with parties through the early months of 2004

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## BEYOND BORDERS

*Edited excerpts from an unpublished paper by Cheryl Tomatuk-Bagan*

"I sit and watch the Cree arguing with each other through the non-Aboriginal lawyers to settle legislation initiated by a non-Aboriginal government in a non-Aboriginal court. One of the most obvious failures of a legal system that claims to be fair and just is that its creation and design was specifically for people with money. The people with money and power use the system to drain their opponent's resources. Is this the Cree way?"

"I use this reality to demonstrate the fact that ingrained colonialistic policies and practices are written within the words of the JBNQA and the New Relationship Agreement, and yet the focus seems to be solely on dollar signs. It is interesting that section 3.2.7, although approved by the Cree, was a government initiated idea. Is there that much lack of faith by Cree leaders in Cree people that we have to restrict the ability to exist as beneficiaries and Cree people beyond the territory? That we had to specifically design a clause in the agreement to keep Indians on their reserves? Out of sight and out of mind is the phrase that comes to mind."

"The obvious fact that the Cree are allowing words on paper decide who they are is absurd. I am Cree no matter where I choose to reside or where I am domiciled. These limitations have such a great influence on who we are as Cree people, we should be asking ourselves if we have made any steps forward with sovereignty or have we been colonized so successfully that these new agreements are not modern day treaties, but modern day tools of colonialism and control that we are efficiently implementing amongst our people?"

*Cheryl Tomatuk-Bagan is a Cree woman from Moose Factory, Ontario, and has recently completed a four-year Bachelor of Arts with Honours majoring in Native Studies.*

May 1985 MoCreebec Development Corporation Ltd. is incorporated on May 22, 1985, in which small businesses could be initiated and established as job creation and community development endeavours. The Moosonee Cable Company is established.

## Congratulations MoCreebec!

Here is to 25 years of vision, hard work, persistence and achievement! We've been honoured to work with you on the ecolodge and other projects, and are always appreciative of your depth of thought, and depth of action, for your community, for our broader community, and for our earth. May the next 25 years bring continued success in every regard!

MACLEOD FARLEY  
&  
ASSOCIATES

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making change happen...together



*The Walking Out Ceremony is one of the Cree rites of passage that is carried out on behalf of young children. It is a way of introducing the youngest members of the family to the community and to their traditional roles as males and females within Cree society.*

## WHAT IS THE MOCREEBEC CONSTITUTION AND OATH?

Ratified by fifty-one people of the MoCreebec community on June 6th, 1993, the Constitution represents the MoCreebec people's common identity within a sovereign Cree Nation. The MoCreebec Constitutional Framework is a result of an extensive community dialogue in the late 1980's and early 1990's that set out to determine our collective future. It is a document reflecting the Cree people's adaptability and openness to change for our present and future well-being, and is meant to evolve with the people.

To become a member, individuals must first read the Constitution.

In supporting the principles, individuals are welcome to sign the Membership Oath. The Oath is a document pledging support of the goals of the MoCreebec community.

If you are a beneficiary of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement, and wish to know more, feel free to contact the MoCreebec office. Upon request, a package of our Constitution, the background of MoCreebec and an Oath will be sent by mail.

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## LEGAL CHALLENGE CHRONOLOGY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

August 2004	Meeting with legal counsel and membership in Moose Factory to update and inform about the case, legal process and possible future outcomes
December 2004	Preparing petitioners for cross-examinations in Montreal in January 2005
Winter/Spring 2005	Meetings with parties through the early months of 2005
January 2005	Two days of cross-examination of petitioners in Montreal
June 2005	Three days of cross-examination of petitioners in Moose Factory
June 2005	Meeting with legal counsel and MoCreebec Membership and Beneficiaries to update and inform about the legal challenge
November 2005	The parties expected to enter their defense

June 1987 Consult '87 is organized to address the issues of beneficiaries in Moosonee and Moose Factory, particularly demographics, membership and landbase.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MoCREEBEC CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

RATIFIED JUNE 6, 1993

## PART I

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Recognizing the supremacy and will of the Creator, the people who have chosen the name MoCreebec renew the social contract of Sharing, Kindness, Strength and Honesty which was the basis for the first meeting of Aboriginal and European peoples.

We reaffirm the aboriginal rights guaranteed by the Canadian Constitution, asserting that these rights also embody a sense of community, equality, a need for independence and self reliance.

Bound by a shared history and common destiny, with ties both to our origins and to our home today, MoCreebec, as part of the Cree Nation, is empowered with a natural right of governance founded on the values, beliefs, culture, language and collective wisdom of the Cree people.

## PART II

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- (1) MoCreebec members have chosen to give formal recognition of their community so as:
- (a) to express the Common Identity of its members, despite their diverse origins;
  - (b) to represent the MoCreebec community in the absence of local or regional representation of its members or their interests;
  - (c) to restore the integrity of their independence and relationship with other orders of government;
  - (d) to establish a foundation for community control of its members' common destiny;
  - (e) to create conditions that enhance the quality of life of its members through community effort and support;



## Moosonee Cable

Owned & Operated  
by the  
MoCreebec Development Corporation Ltd



We install  
Cable/Fiber Optics/Cable Internet

December 1987 To generate employment opportunities and financial resources when support from Grand Council of Crees discontinues, MoCreebec establishes the Moosonee Cable TV company.

- (f) to motivate community participation in pursuit of the Common Good;
- (g) to organize individual ability for the collective benefit of the community as a whole;
- (h) to defend the aboriginal rights of its members, while promoting their language and culture.
- In keeping with its Guiding Principles and Purpose, MoCreebec is committed to the fulfillment of the following Objectives on behalf of its members:
- (a) the attainment of the basic needs of life;
- (b) economic independence and support for its members' self reliance;
- (c) individual freedom to choose the level of participation in the traditional or cash-based economies;
- (d) the ability to determine economic priorities based on collective values;
- (e) the enhancement of its members' language and culture through a celebration of the Cree way of life;
- (f) a social contract based on a shared spiritual foundation and a respect for traditional customs and practices;
- (g) a critical re-evaluation of Cree culture and values as the basis for the resolution of local and regional conflict;
- (h) the healing and empowerment of its members;
- (i) the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment;
- (j) the mutual understanding and application of legislative or constitutional guarantees of aboriginal rights for the individual and collective benefit of MoCreebec members;
- (k) the recognition of MoCreebec members' right to share in the traditional territories of the Cree Nation.

### PART III

#### MEMBERSHIP, RATIFICATION AND ORGANIZATION

Membership in MoCreebec is founded on the traditions of freedom and sharing; responsibility to oneself, to one's family and to the community as a whole. Membership is an individual's choice. Accordingly, the authority of the MoCreebec Constitutional Framework is based on the interdependence of its members. To reflect this interdependence MoCreebec members have chosen to empower the natural core of their community — the family.

#### MEMBERSHIP

- (1) Eligibility for membership in MoCreebec is based on the fulfillment of the following three criteria:
- (a) Descendence from a "Y" dialect Cree speaking person (on mother's or father's side);
- (b) Birthplace or Resident "home" in the Moosonee/ Moose Factory area;

**We install  
Cable/Fiber Optics/Cable Internet**



**Moose Factory Cable Inc.**

September 1989 Another business entity that supports the organization, MoCreebec Development Corporation develops a joint venture with Moose Band to provide cable TV to Moose Factory Island. In September 1989, the Moose Factory Cable Inc. is established.



(c) Having reached the age of 18 (eighteen), a commitment to and the promotion of the principles, purpose, and objectives of the MoCreebec Constitutional Framework.

A commitment to and the promotion of the principles, purpose and objectives of the MoCreebec Constitutional Framework will be demonstrated by:

(a) an active interest and participation in the affairs and discussions of the MoCreebec community;

(b) a willingness to relinquish beneficiary status, if necessary, under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement;

(c) a willingness to empower MoCreebec as sole agent in the administration of any legislative benefits or constitutional guarantees of its members;

(d) a willingness to consider appropriate membership contributions, based on community agreement, for the purpose of supporting community representation, economic development, social and cultural efforts.

## LEADERSHIP

MoCreebec members choose to select their representatives based on family relation as the fundamental structure of governance.

(1) Each family name will constitute its own Clan Council, with all members of this family who choose to become MoCreebec members represented on it.

(2) Each Clan Council will meet at appropriate times to discuss issues of interest or concern to the MoCreebec community.

(3) Clan Councils are free to adopt rules and procedures which will assist in the effective working of their council.

(4) Each Clan Council may also choose to constitute whatever committees, offices, associations or sub-councils necessary for the smooth operation of its deliberations.

(5) Each Clan Council will select a member of their family to represent their clan's interests on a MoCreebec Council for a period of 3 (three) years.

(6) At the same time, each Clan Council will select one Elder and one Youth as honorary non-voting members of the MoCreebec Council.

(7) Each Clan Council will also select a member of their family to act as a Director of the MoCreebec Development Corporation for a period of 3 (three) years.

(8) Each Clan Council must formally constitute itself as such prior to its representatives being recognized as a member of the MoCreebec Council.

The Clan Council's representative to the MoCreebec Council will hold primary responsibility for the timely communication of MoCreebec Council business and decisions.

*For a full text of the twelve-page Constitution, please call the MoCreebec Office at 705-658-4769 and speak with Randy Kapashesit.*



June 6, 1993 MoCreebec members take a historic step when they ratify, "The MoCreebec Constitutional Framework". Elder John D. Visitor becomes the first of 51 people attending the Ratification Meeting on June 6th to sign his name, formally committing himself to the MoCreebec community's future. Membership is in both Moosonee and Moose Factory.

# DEVELOPING & SUPPORTING A STRONG CREE ECONOMY

The challenge for every person is to grow and develop to their fullest potential. The challenge for every Nation is to provide the opportunity for its citizens to reach their collective potential based on their common values and beliefs.

Cree people are no different than other Nations when it comes to these challenges. Our individual ability to provide for our need depends on our collective ability to build our economy.

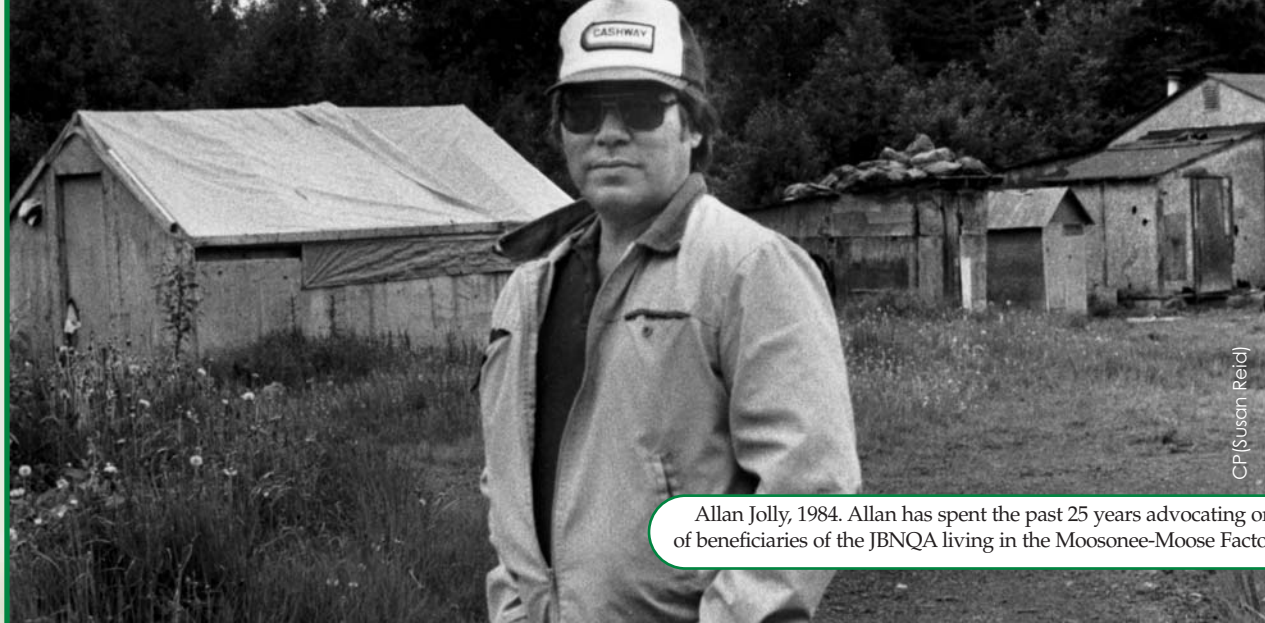
What is a Cree economy? A Cree economy is business and opportunity created for our individual and collective well-being now, and for the future. It is the encouragement of opportunity supporting our values as Cree people.

Why is it important to support Cree businesses? We choose to build our economy for the sake of having a future so that we may see more jobs created for ourselves and our children and their children. Supporting Cree businesses means that we value the effort made and we want to encourage more opportunities for all of us.

We have a long way to go yet, but we are on our way. This is the reason it is important to support Cree businesses. We invest in ourselves by doing so.

August 1994 Cree Village Corporation Ltd. opens the Cree Village Restaurant for business. This includes a 44-seat restaurant, a craft shop and a small marina. In May 2000, the restaurant closes its doors, but only to expand to a 66-seat restaurant featuring a varied menu with a special focus on Aboriginal cuisine.





Allan Jolly, 1984. Allan has spent the past 25 years advocating on behalf of beneficiaries of the JBNQA living in the Moosonee-Moose Factory area.

## UHIPKAAPUUTWAASUWIN: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Over the past twenty-five years of MoCreebec's existence, our job has been to lay the groundwork — putting in place the structure and resources needed to enable us and the next generation to continue with the work we have started.

Early on in the 1980s, I clearly remember at general community meetings when some of our elderly people spoke up and said, "It is better if people learn to help themselves, rather than expecting to be helped." At first, I didn't fully grasp what they meant by those words. But in time, I slowly began to understand the wisdom of their words to mean that whatever it is we are going to do, we should continue to strive for self-reliance and economic independence.

Today, I am convinced more than ever, they were right and their words of advice is good. I firmly believe we must encourage our people at all times, both as individuals and as a collective group, to follow this principle in everything we aspire to do. We must adhere to this in all of our endeavours if we are to regain our sense of true identity and full autonomy as Cree people. It would be a terrible wrong if we caused anyone to lose their own sense of self-reliance and for that person to become dependent on another person or another organization or even a government agency. As I give a quick

overview of the community economic development portfolio, my hope is that you will see we have tried to stay on course with this direction and vision.

MoCreebec started February 1980 with a concern and focus to address immediate problems such as the housing needs of our people. Over a twenty year period, we have seen the construction of nearly two-hundred new homes in both Moosonee and Moose Factory, and many more homes being renovated and repaired. In the "tent city" area on Moose Factory Island, we had to build a whole new subdivision before we could construct new houses for families living in the area. Today, "tent city" no longer exists and some people in our community now call this new housing area "Quebec City". We have come a long way from tent frame dwellings to modern, fully serviced homes. Some families have built their own house with their own resources, which is good as we need individuals and families to be self-reliant.

Others depended on the collective effort of MoCreebec to access government programs in order to assist them in the process of getting a house. Nevertheless, these government-funded housing programs are not free. The homeowner has to

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September 1995      MoCreebec Health Program is created with a Health Director position and a volunteer Health Program Committee. Funding is accessed from Health Canada and Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Response Fund. MoCreebec representation is initiated on local and regional boards and committees that focus on social and health development issues.







# FIRST WORDS

*Excerpts from the Introduction to "Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom" by Taiaiake Alfred. Broadview Press 2005*

"One problem of indigenous politics is that there is no consistency of means and ends in the way we are struggling to empower ourselves. Approaches to making change that advocate reforming the colonial legal system or state policy or that seek empowerment through the accumulation of financial resources may seem to hold promise, but they are opposed to basic and shared Onkwehonwe values in either the means they would use to advance the struggle or in the ends they would achieve. Legalist, economic, and, for that matter, violent insurgent approaches are all simply mimicking foreign logics, each in a different way. How you fight determines who you will become when the battle is over, and there is always means-ends consistency at the end of the game."

"Our politicians find themselves cooperating with their (former) enemies and adversaries to preserve the non-threatening, very limited resolutions they have worked with the colonial powers to create and define as end objectives. They have accommodated themselves to colonialism, not defeated it. And they have forgotten that the ancestral movement always sought total freedom from domination and a complete revolt against empire, not halfway compromises and weak surrenders to watered-down injustices."

"The time to change direction is now. Signs of defeat have been showing on the faces of our people for too long. Young people, those who have not yet learned to accommodate to the fact that they are expected to accept their lesser status quietly, are especially hard hit by defeatism and alienation. Youth in our communities and in urban centres are suffering. Suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, cultural confusion, sexual violence, obesity: they suffer these scourges worse than anyone else. It is not because they lack money or jobs in the mainstream society (we shouldn't forget that our people have always been "poor" as consumers in comparison to white people). It is because their identities, their cultures, and their rights are under attack..."

"The challenge is to find a way to regenerate ourselves and take back our dignity. Then, meaningful change will be possible, and it will be a new existence, one of possibility, where Onkwehonwe will have the ability to make the kinds of choices we need to make concerning the quality of our lives and begin to recover a truly human way of life."

*Taiaiake is a Kanien'kehaka scholar and orator who has dedicated himself to indigenous struggles for dignity, unity, and strength. Onkwehonwe in Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) translates to original people.*

1996 For the first time, the "Y" dialect is offered in a community language program. Funding for a Coordinator/Teacher position is accessed through Moosonee Native Friendship Centre's Cree Literacy Program for one year.

**Congratulations MoCreebec on  
your 25th Anniversary**



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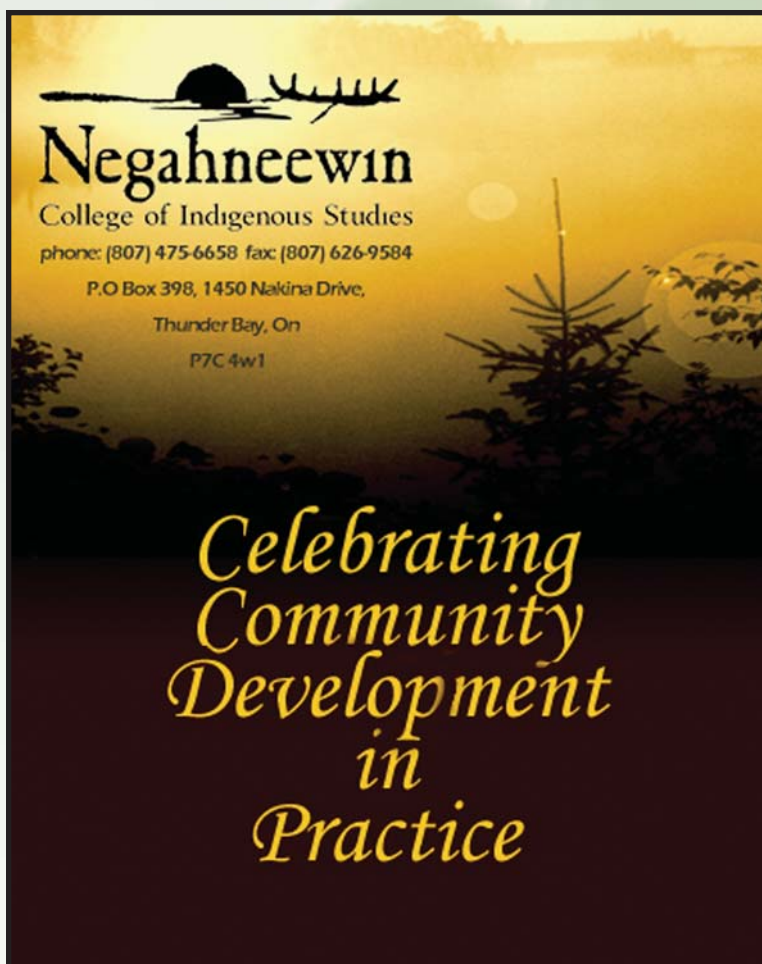


# "TENT CITY" REBUILT

This summer a handful of students undertook an ambitious project — to rebuild "tent city." In actuality, as you can see from the photos to the right, they decided to build a model of the old neighbourhood. The detail that this model incorporates is incredible. The following students must be applauded for their impressive efforts:

- Jessie Gunner
- Andrea Jolly
- Maria Gunner
- Megan Moore

The model is on display at the MoCreebec office. Anyone interested in seeing the model is more than welcome to stop by the office and see this micro-marvel!



**KLIPPENSTEINS**  
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS  
160, John Street  
Suite 300  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 2E5

March 1997      The Steering Committee for the Cree Village Ec lodge is organized and plans progress from an idea of a motel/hotel to an ecolodge, later to become a first in North America.



# AGED WISDOM

As part of Cree tradition, we often have the benefit of the practical wisdom that comes from experience in the presence of our Elders. At 93 years of age, John D. Visitor has experienced the many changes that capture our collective experience. Born and raised on the land, and having raised his own children on the land, he has made the transition to the current lifestyle we live. Through it all, this beloved Elder continues to reflect many of our values as Cree people. From him, we have learned to depend on ourselves and each other while being thankful to our Creator for what we have been blessed with.

*Excerpts from an interview with John D. Visitor, August 10, 2005. Transcribed and translated by Greta Gunner-Visitor, granddaughter of John D. Visitor.*

*"This way of life, the Cree way of life is honorable, it was a very honorable way of life!"*

*"My deepest desire is that we are able to reach the youth, that they can be spoken to, especially those who appear beyond help. Reach out to them, speak with them..."*

*"We must try everything in our power to retain and maintain the Cree way of life."*

## John D. Visitor

*"...I've lived my life for whatever Chishemanituu had given me in terms of helping myself, I did not sit idly by to await help from others, I pursued and endeavored to help myself as much as possible — this is the philosophy I lived by."*

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Moose River Broadcasting Association is incorporated on January 22, 1997 — a Community Channel and Local Broadcasting Network between both Moosonee and Moose Factory.



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*Congratulations MoCreebec on your 25th Anniversary*



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CREE VILLAGE ECOLODGE !

Winner of the 2005 Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Air Canada Business of the Year Award – Single Unit.

You may have heard the news—Cree Village Ecolodge ([creevillage.com](http://creevillage.com)) continues to grow with national and international attention as one of the top ten eco-destinations in North America. Rated third on their list, the notable magazine Natural Home ([naturalhomemagazine.com](http://naturalhomemagazine.com)) recognizes the Ecolodge as an environmentally-responsible lodging facility operated by the MoCreebec community. The Toronto Star and the Ottawa Citizen also highlight the Ecolodge as one of the top ten eco-destinations in North America.

The Ecolodge was also featured in the Spring 2005 journal of the National Museum of the American Indian. Cree Village Ecolodge and MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation is grateful to Paul Lantz for helping with the photos. Many congratulations to the Ecolodge staff and board!



July 2000      Construction of the ecolodge began Fall 1999 and completed July 2000. The Cree Village Ecolodge opens its doors for business on July 15, 2000. The majority of funding is accessed from Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation.



# "THIS IS MY HOME."

-ELAINE WABANO



**I was born and raised here because my parents chose to move here to look for employment. Why should I be punished because of something I couldn't control?**

Born in 1967, Elaine Wabano, affiliated with Waskaganish First Nation, was raised with her siblings in Moose Factory. She grew up in "tent city" like many MoCreebec people. "Back then, we didn't have running water, or electricity. It was small and close together. My parents, two brothers, three sisters and I lived in a small tent. It was a pretty big deal when we moved into an actual house."

She remembers traditional cooking, berry-picking, camping, and fishing. She grew up speaking Cree, and can still understand but has lost part of the spoken language. She realizes the changes and the differences among generations today, "There is more bad stuff to get into now. For example, drugs are becoming easier to obtain. Young people aren't as motivated to help around the house, or even further their education. I notice a lot end up dropping out. Children have too much dependence on their parents nowadays."

Elaine attended the old Village School and Moose Fort Public School in Moose Factory and had always wanted to become a nurse. She attended Northern College for three years and received a Nursing Diploma. She continued at Lakehead University for three more years where she received a Nurse Practitioner Degree.

While pursuing her education, Elaine came across hardships. "I got pregnant at a young age, so I decided to delay College for a bit. It was difficult to get back in the swing of the school mode. There were times I got

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

*The Weeneebayko Eeyou Association is dedicated to the preservation of culture and language, to the plight of MoCreebec families, to the education of our youth, to the health of our people, and to the economic and social well being of MoCreebec members.*



April 1998 The Weeneebayko Eeyou (Charities) Association is registered with Revenue Canada on April 1st, 1998. The Association begins its operations as a charitable foundation on May 25, 1998. The Association is run by a volunteer board.

# O-GI

## OFIFC-GREAT Initiative



### O-GI Quick Facts

O-GI has been in operation since October 1999.

O-GI is part of the HRDC Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy.

O-GI is a unique partnership between an urban Aboriginal organization and a First Nation.

O-GI has a network of 12 Local Delivery Mechanisms (LDMS) that administer program intervention dollars to O-GI's 24 employment units.

O-GI serves over 6,000 Aboriginal people, province-wide, on an annual basis.

O-GI fills a service gap by providing assistance to Aboriginal people who are not affiliated with an Ontario First Nation, Métis or Inuit group.

O-GI offers employment support, self-employment assistance, job creation partnerships, targeted wage subsidies, skills enhancement, training purchases, mobility and relocation assistance as well as a number of youth programs.

O-GI provides support and training for continuous improvement in the skills and abilities of employment unit personnel.

O-GI has hosted two regional career symposiums (in Hamilton and Thunder Bay) with a focus on youth and single mothers.

O-GI has published a comprehensive, province-wide Labour Market Assessment, which draws upon the experiences of almost 7,000 respondents.

O-GI has sponsored a province-wide Aboriginal youth issues study, involving over 2,000 Aboriginal youth.

### What is the OFIFC-GREAT Initiative (O-GI)?

O-GI is part of the Government of Canada's Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), which is designed to help Aboriginal people prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.

#### Who administers the Initiative?

The O-GI is a unique partnership between the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT).

The OFIFC represents the collective interests of twenty-eight member Friendship Centres located in towns and cities throughout the province of Ontario.

GREAT is a community organization that delivers innovative and culture-based employment and training programs and services to Six Nations members, wherever they reside.

This partnership has been in place since 1999, when it was successful in a formal bid to administer employment services for urban Aboriginal people in Ontario.

#### Who delivers the services?

O-GI has a network of 12 Local Delivery Mechanisms (LDMS) that administer program intervention dollars to O-GI's 24 employment units. These units are primarily located in Friendship Centres around the province.

#### Who is eligible for O-GI?

Although O-GI provides basic service to everyone, only Aboriginal people who are not eligible for funding through other agreements can access O-GI program funding. This includes:

- Non-status individuals who do not consider themselves Métis or who have no affiliation to a First Nation or Inuit community.
- Status Indians who have no connection to a band.
- Status or non-status out of province Aboriginal individuals.

Where funding is requested from individuals who are affiliated with First Nation, Métis or Inuit groups, O-GI refers to appropriate agreement holders.





## "My HOME"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

homesick, being away from my family. I had to organize myself for university in the city, and my children as well. I had all these worries, plus my education." During these challenging times, she felt like giving up. Her children kept her motivated and her family supported her. "I had it in my mind that I needed to have a good job to take care of my family."

Although she was funded by Cree School Board for her college education, Elaine was denied funding for her university studies. She was forced to turn to other sources of funding like the Federal-funded Avataq organization and the Provincial-funded Ontario Student Assistance Program. She remembers, "It's hard to live on student allowances when you have a family."

Elaine hopes for the best with the MoCreebec legal challenge. She speaks from her own experience of being denied access to educational benefits because of the Section 3.2.7 policy in the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. "It directly affects me and many other people as well. I was born and raised here because my parents chose to move here to look for employment. Why should I be punished because of something I couldn't control?" If all goes well in resolving the issue, Elaine can already see the great benefits it would bring to the MoCreebec community and beneficiaries of the JBNQA, "Students would receive education funding. Members will be able to exercise their health care rights, not only the present people, but also our children and their children and so on."

After overcoming obstacles, Elaine is grateful and shares, "I am very proud of my accomplishments. I have worked very hard to be where I am today." She hopes that young people

will be encouraged and motivated from her experiences.

Her contribution as a Nurse Practitioner at the hospital is appreciated by many. She knows the people well, and relates to her community's experiences. In the future, Elaine plans on attending medical school to become a doctor and return to Moose Factory. Why Moose Factory? Because in her words, "This is my home."



### Congratulations to the MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation on their 25th Anniversary



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# NOT JUST A SUMMER STUDENT

From my personal experience of working at MoCreebec, I have come to know the staff members and I can tell you quite a bit about those who work there.

First, let me explain a bit about myself and my own situation. I am a 21 year old aboriginal student and have recently completed my second year of university. I have lived in this area for most of my life. As a summer student, I set out in search of employment in April 2005, and applied at a number of places. In May, I was contacted by MoCreebec, and took on a new job.

Compared to my earlier years of employment, I see a difference between MoCreebec and other places where I have been employed. Despite that I was a shy new employee, the staff members were welcoming and easy to talk with. They have confidence in me and sincerely value my input. I did not expect to feel as important as I feel working with MoCreebec — I am not “just a summer student”.

They invited me to participate in the Cree Conference on Residential Schools

held this past summer in Mistissini, Quebec. I was also invited to sit on committees, edit questionnaires, participate in the youth conference in Kashechewan, Ontario, help in the Gathering of Our People, and even more. MoCreebec puts forth a good effort to encourage young people to become involved. And this makes me excited and motivated to see what else is in store.

I am amazed at how the opinions and well-being of youth are valued. I am thankful for the encouragement to express, gain, and use my knowledge. My presence and voice no longer goes unheard!

I am not looked down upon because of my age. Instead, my point of view is welcomed. They do not discriminate against me because I do not know how to speak Cree, or the fact that I moved away from the area to pursue my education. There is a distinct sense of kindness, peace, and hope that can be nurtured amongst aboriginal people. It is obvious to me that their goals are aimed at benefitting Cree people as a whole. I can see through their care and

concern that they are rooting for me and many others, to succeed in our education. They do this by offering us the chance to experience and explore.

*Megan Moore is a Cree woman from Moosonee, Ontario, and is pursuing post-secondary studies.*

**It is obvious to me that {MoCreebec's} goals are aimed at benefitting Cree people as a whole.**

May 2000      Eight Clan Councils are organized and recognized at the MoCreebec Membership Ratification Meeting.



# TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF ORGANIZING

Thoughts about ourselves, our values, and beliefs are reflected in how we act as individuals, communities, and a nation. Just as self-esteem and self-confidence is nurtured and reflected in an individual's character, capabilities, and motivation — a community and a nation holds its own esteem and confidence that determines its own destiny. MoCreebec is one community within a sovereign Cree Nation, promoting and implementing practices of self-determination.

With members living in the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory, we speak the "Y" dialect, one among many Cree dialects from across North America. With ancestry from the eastern James Bay coast, MoCreebec people have been in this part of James Bay for generations. This year, MoCreebec celebrates twenty-five years of organizing.

Self-determination simply means taking our place in this world — promoting well-being for all and for coming generations — and consciously evaluating who we are and where we are going. It is constant work. Through our Constitution, we ask of each other to respond to our cultural, social, political, and economic needs. This is an enormous responsibility, but only by doing as a whole we are re-building a Cree governance system. Affirmed by Elders John D. Visitor, Mary Shanush, the late George and Minnie Jolly, the late Bert Trapper and many others, the clan councils are based on our traditional hunting clans where the families have become central once again. The purpose of this

decision-making process is to meet our community needs and resolve contemporary issues that affect the core of our human development.

Acting on our Constitution we are taking the responsibility to better our lives and our relationships with one another. The three-year MoCreebec Community Education and Empowerment Project helped us to understand that implementing our clan councils was the beginning to vigilant work that requires more tools and having everyone's commitment. Preparing our young people remains an outstanding task, not only for our community, but for every community. Yet, we have much to be thankful for in all of our successes and challenges.

Cree principles and traditions are thousands of years old. In doing this work, we share the message with all Cree people that we need to rely on each other and believe in our Cree values and practices that are still alive and well. We are capable of resolving any issue when our processes are based on sharing, kindness, strength, and honesty. And as we move ahead into the next twenty-five years, the good life we choose now will only help to nurture strong and healthy people again.

*Donna Ashamock, Community Organizer with MoCreebec*

September 2002

In a defining letter to the Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Regional Authority, MoCreebec objects to the lack of a polling station in Moosonee/Moose Factory to participate in the election of the Grand Council of the Crees, despite polling stations in North Bay and Ottawa. This begins the legal work at resolving Section 3.2.7. of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement.

**GREY CASGRAIN**  
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**Congratulations MoCreebec!**

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**25 years of advocacy**  
for the Cree JBNQA beneficiaries  
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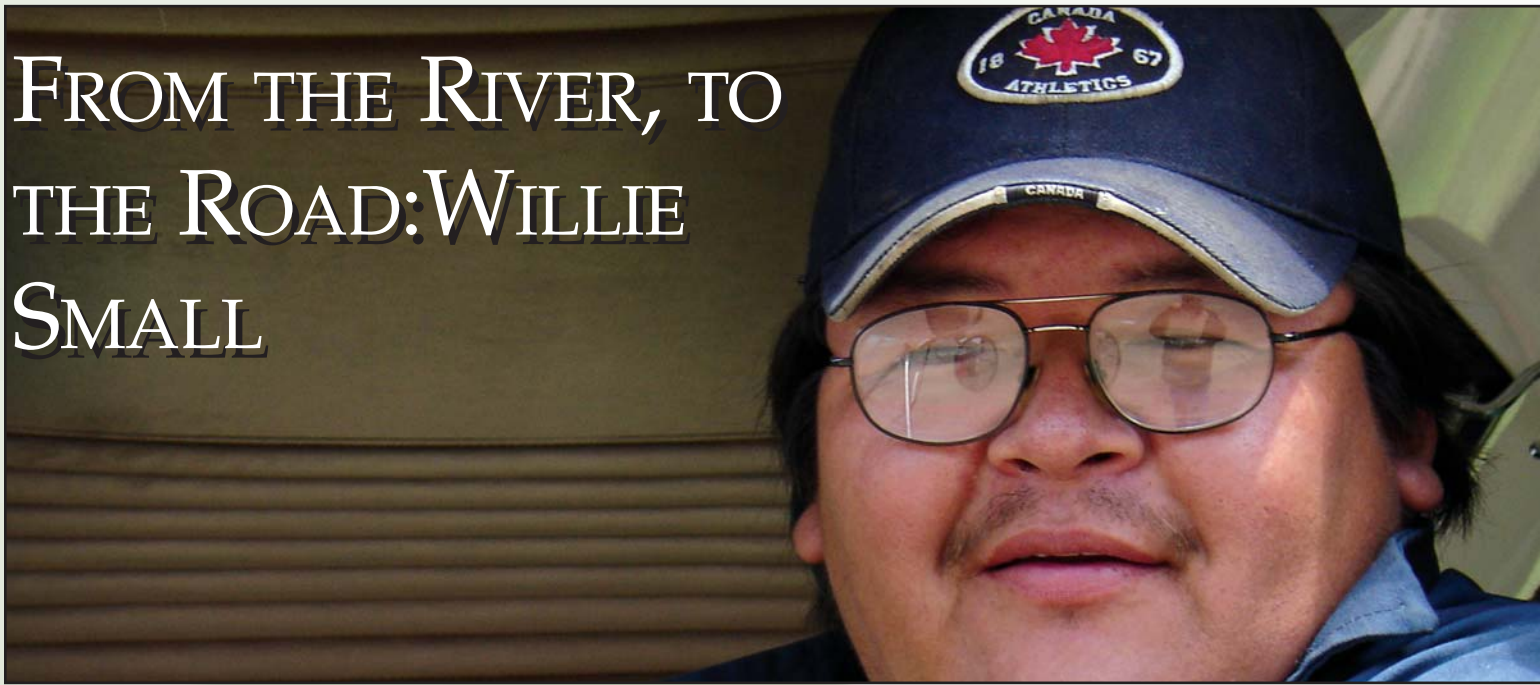
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# MoCREEBEC EMPLOYMENT UNIT

## FROM THE RIVER, TO THE ROAD: WILLIE SMALL



Just a few years ago, Willie Small was struggling to make ends meet as a seasonal water taxi operator. Today, Willie is employed full time with Pahtaypun Fuels in Moosonee, Ontario. Each day Willie climbs into the cab of a tandem truck delivering bulk fuel loads to homes and businesses in the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory Island. The journey from freighter canoe to fuel truck operator was a long but successful one.

Willie's journey began when he knew he wanted something more. Determined to make a change in his employment status, he came to the MoCreebec Employment Unit seeking financial assistance to attend heavy equipment training. In October 2002, he left behind his wife and five children in Moose Factory to attend a seven-week heavy equipment and DZ training course at Fifth Wheel Training Institute in New Liskeard, Ontario. Being away from his family was hard, but "we stuck it out," says Willie.

After successfully completing the program, Willie returned to the community only to find that the employment opportunities were still hard to find. It would be in the spring

of 2003 that he would identify an opportunity and once again seek the assistance of the MoCreebec Employment Unit.

He made an appointment with the Employment Counsellor and they discussed the possibility of a partnership between the Employment Unit, Fifth Wheel Training Institute, Moosonee Transportation Limited and Willie. An on-the-job training plan was designed by MTL that would give Willie valuable experience, and a return trip to Fifth Wheel would give Willie the opportunity to gain an AZ class license.

"I really enjoyed the course — and I got my AZ license," smiles Willie as he recalls the second trip out to Fifth Wheel. After gaining his AZ license, Willie's work with MTL went from forklift operator to driving the long-haul tractor trailers over the frozen muskeg to the coastal communities along the James Bay. He delivered thousands of litres to Fort Albany, Kashatchewan, Attawapiskat and even to the Victor Diamond Mine site that winter.

Although he was laid off at the end of the training session, the valuable work experience and the AZ certification helped

September 2002 Accessing funding from Human Resource Development Canada through O-GI (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and Grand River Employment and Training Initiative), MoCreebec opens its Employment Unit with a Coordinator position and a volunteer Steering Committee.

**MoCreebec Employment Unit**

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Willie gain a full time job with MTL's sister company, Paytahpun Fuels.

Willie is proud of the fact that he can now provide for his family all through the year. "Now, I don't have to worry about the river freezing up," laughs Willie as he reflects back on his days as a seasonal worker struggling to make a living. "Today, I have a steady income, I don't have to worry about supporting my family and paying bills – and I love my job."

Although there was a lot of sacrifice on the part of his family, Willie is grateful for their support during his training, and for the willingness of Moosonee Transportation Limited to provide a work experience and to the MoCreebec Employment Unit for their financial assistance.

Today, others look to Willie for advice and inspiration. "People come to me now, and ask me how they can get training," says Willie. He encourages all of those that want to get into this career field to do all they can to achieve their goal.



**“Today, I have a steady income, I don't have to worry about supporting my family and paying bills – and I love my job!”**

## CREE CAPTAIN JOHN V.K. ISERHOFF



"My plans for the future are happening today," beams

Captain John V.K. Iserhoff. John is the only Cree marine Captain in James Bay, and quite possibly, in Canada.

"In high school, I wanted to join the Navy," says John, "that was about the same time that I started working on this vessel." He worked his way up from deckhand to Captain in nine years on the Manitou Island II.

The MoCreebec Employment Unit played an integral part in John's success in becoming the first Cree marine Captain. In 2003 the Moose Band Development Corporation approached the MoCreebec Employment Unit with a training plan designed for John, a member of the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation.

In order to realize his dream, John had to return to college for a six-month stint.

Although he says that college was scary, John hopes that everyone with a dream will continue to work towards the realization of their aspirations as he has. "This is it," smiles John, "this is my goal!"

April 2002 The Moose River Cable Services is incorporated on April 17, 2002, as a joint venture with Moose Cree First Nation operating the cable internet services and new cable packages.





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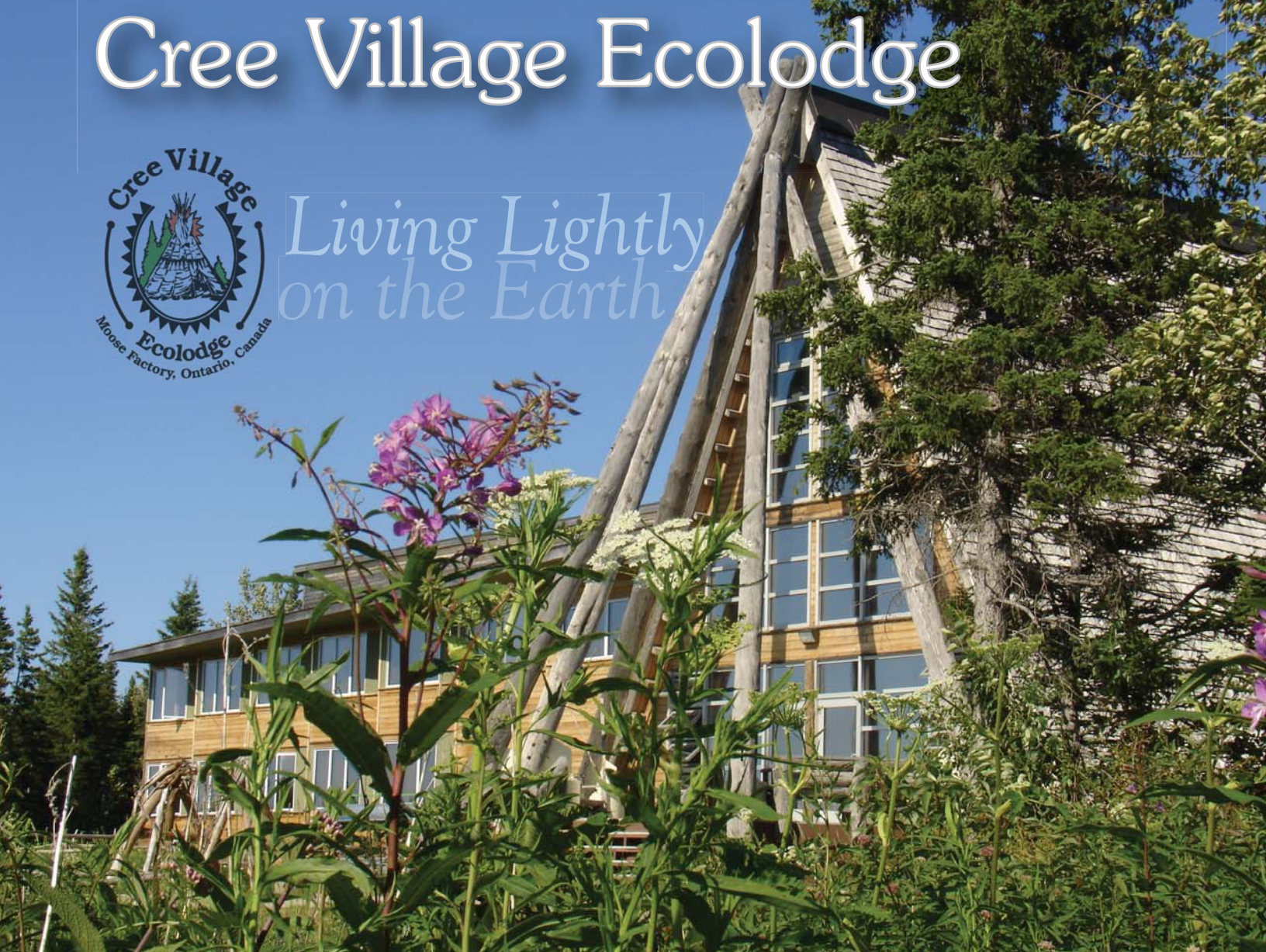
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# Cree Village Ecolodge



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Surrounded by the rugged beauty of the Canadian sub-Arctic and steeped in Indigenous culture, the Cree Village Ecolodge is a uniquely envisioned and developed facility expressing the timeless values of the MoCreebec people.

A short boat ride downriver takes you to the saltwater of James Bay where seals and Beluga whales are common. Adjacent river systems abound with fish and wildlife including moose and caribou, pike and trout, geese, eagles and many other species of migratory bird.

Every detail of the twenty-room Ecolodge is designed for maximum comfort and minimum environmental impact. Energy efficiency and passive energy conserving strategies are responsive to the local climate. Furniture, carpeting, wall treatments, mattresses, pillows and liners are all 100% natural wool and organic cotton. Even the low-e argon windows are finished with natural birch wood blinds. Four of our rooms feature composting toilets, which use no water, produce no odors and require no chemical treatments.

The landmark Shaapuhtuwaan Hall, based on a traditional Cree dwelling structure, serves seasonally available Indigenous cuisine that includes naturally harvested wild rice, berries, and maple syrup. As Indigenous people, we believe we are naturally situated to act as your hosts of the natural world.


*Winner of the 2005 Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Air Canada Business of the Year Award – Single Unit.*

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