



ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024

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All Landscape and Nature Photos by Katherine Dehm



Photo by Katherine Dehm

Message from the Chief



Christina Gilpin

Wachiyak Wemindji Eeyouch!

We are in the third year of the current Council's term. By next year, there will be an election.

I would like to thank all of the Council members—Arden, Rocky, George, Ernest, Roslyn and Stanley—for their dedication and determination, and for their decision-making for the community. Special thanks to Karen Mistacheesick and Josephine Natawapineskum for their instrumental support.

The management has developed a strategic plan, aligned with the Vision and Mission adopted by resolution, by past leadership, which continues to be supported by current leadership. This management document is an essential tool for the implementation stages and has a consistent set of principles, rooted in our traditional Cree values, while using modern-day approaches and technology. Each department is responsible for carrying out their goals. Many of their presentations at Band meetings are based on achieved actions and upcoming plans for short-term and long-term goals. In this annual report, you will read about the work that the various departments carry out for the community.

The management and support staff continue to provide exceptional programs and services. There is a mechanism for reporting non-compliance, and they use this tool to make improvements for the organization. Any feedback shared by community members is greatly appreciated. We, as a community, should be thankful for the hardworking and amazing staff that we have at the Cree Nation of Wemindji and for their collective efforts in making Wemindji a great place to call home. Special thanks to our Executive Staff: Katherine Moses, Director General, Shalane Tomatuk, Treasurer, and all the directors, managers, coordinators and support staff.

We enacted the Elders Council Law Chishaayiyiu wiishuwaawin and we finally have an official

Elders Council. I want to reaffirm the following statement: We value the knowledge that our Elders have, and we want to have an approach to readily include the Elders' participation in community development and prosperity. Congratulations to Fred Asquabaneskum, Betsy Asquabaneskum, Dennis Georgekish, Frances Mark, Johnny Mark, Karen Mistacheesick, and Linda Stewart for winning their election, voted in by their fellow Elders, for a term of four years.

We also have a new Youth Council for a term of two years. Congratulations to Youth Chief Drayden Mistacheesick, and Councillors Arianna Atsynia, Katie Gilpin, Layla Miniquaken, Mary-Jane Miniquaken, Myles Shanush, and Delilah Stephen. There are two vacancies. Thanks to them for their commitment, and to Wawa Danyluk and the previous Youth Council for their leadership and invaluable contribution to the wellbeing of our youth population.

The Miyupimaatsiiun Committee members were appointed for an additional year so that they can complete the work of drafting a law that will outline their roles and responsibilities. We, as a Council, have had sessions with them so that they can report on their strategies meant to deal with social issues affecting the community.

We have also reconnected in our relationship with the School Administration and Committee. They had an evening slot at our Annual General Assembly, in the fall, because we wanted to support the education system and the employees working tirelessly to educate our children. They were able to compile the community's feedback and they identified a set of objectives for both the Administration and Committee. They also established working relationships with the Cree Language Department to address the Cree language. In a study done by the Cree Language Commission, our community is one of the most at risk for language loss. We must keep speaking to our children in Cree. It is part of our identity.



Top left: George Natawaineskum, Ernest Tomatuk, Rocky Georgekish, Stanley Shashaweskum, Arden Visitor.

Bottom left: Chief Christina Gilpin, Karen Mistacheesick, Roslyn Tomatuk.

The Tawich Holdings Corporation Board members' appointment was extended for an additional year. We will be evaluating the restructuring that occurred in 2020. They have been given a mandate to update strategic priorities to maximize the businesses' performance and to ensure a thriving economy. They have their own General Assembly now, so that they can report their efforts to the community.

The Housing Committee is working on amending and amalgamating the current laws and policies so that they reflect our reality. We are in a housing crisis, like all Cree communities. There is great demand for housing. There has been a commitment to build 32 out of 57 social housing units so far, with funding received through the Cree Nation Government, by the federal government, over a five-year period.

We had a grand opening for the new arena in the fall. This building was first initiated by the Council in the 2013-2017 term. Thank you to everyone who worked on the project. I am especially happy for the youth and children who were very excited. Now, they will have a beautiful building in which to hold their sports and leisure activities for many years. Go Wemindji, go!

The year 2023-2024 was challenging due to the forest fires last summer. Thank you to the Emergency Coordination Team, the Public Safety Department, the Fire Department, regional entities especially the Cree Health

Board, SOPFEU and provincial Civil Security, for all their support during evacuations and road closures, and to the many individuals who gave their time to help, wherever they could. Out of all the Cree communities, Wemindji was the most impacted community, with 55% of total land affected in Eeyou Istchee. Many lost their cabins and personal belongings. Many events and activities were either delayed or cancelled altogether. With a community that has thrived on the practice of people connecting through feasts, events and activities, all of this was particularly tough on the people. I am so impressed by the community members; they continue to show their support and love for one another. Each person makes a positive impact when they act through love and compassion.

It has been three generations since the move from Old Factory. We came from a people rich in heritage, family and a sense of community. Let us continue the custom of passing on Eeyou values and traditions. We owe it to our ancestors to pass on this knowledge to the new generations.

Happy 65th Anniversary Wemindji! Despite all the challenges we have faced, it is a time of celebration for our community. We must remember that every day we must be grateful for the gifts from the Creator. There will be many events and activities planned. Let us be reminded of how fortunate we are to live in and be part of a prosperous community. Have safe and enjoyable celebrations, Wemindji Eeyouch!

Message from Deputy Chief



Arden Visitor

Watchiayaak!

Once again, I am happy to share a brief message with our community members.

Our community had a busy and eventful past year. We had to endure evacuations to safeguard our vulnerable members from an approaching forest fire. In collaboration with CHB, we focused our efforts on ensuring our members' safety. I want to thank members who had to be evacuated for their cooperation.

In this year's message, I want to highlight two crucial areas that deserve special attention. As a parent and an elected leader of this community, I have always valued our children's education in the Cree ways and culture. We all recognize the significance of child upbringing in our culture. Children have always held an essential place in our Eeyou camps and communities. It is everyone's responsibility to contribute to the nurturing, discipline, and education of the children. It is every child's fundamental right

to have a safe environment in which to grow and develop into a contributing member of our community. We are all responsible for ensuring that children get the encouragement they need, every day.

Secondly, I also want to bring a related matter to everyone's attention. As many of you have noticed, the state of our language has changed within a short time frame. Let's encourage everyone, especially our young people, to continue using our ancestors' beautiful language, to communicate and express their feelings and thoughts. It is important to acknowledge the fact that some people may not be as fluent as others; however, efforts are being made and this is still something to recognize.

I encourage you all to pursue our Cree traditional ways by actively using our hunting territories. Our lands are healing, and the food they provide is healthy. Here, one will find everything that nurtures our bodies and minds.

Photo by Katherine Dehm

Message from Director General



Katherine Moses

The extreme weather and traumatic events that unfolded during the summer of 2023 will remain with us, as a community and as a Nation, for many years. The devastating loss of our forests, wildlife and family cabins, and the smoke and fires that caused travel restrictions, road closures, and multiple evacuations have left an imprint on our memories and have deeply impacted our communities.

It was a challenging year that tested our limits, but what will remain with me, is the collective will to work together and the determination of our staff and our local entities to protect our community and our people. The selfless way our staff reached out to help in any way they could, the willingness to put themselves on the frontlines, the teamwork, the community spirit and the collaboration across entities is how I will remember that summer. I will be forever grateful to our CNW staff, our Emergency Response team, our Evacuation teams (Quebec City, Amos, Chisasibi), our Fire Barrier team, our Gate Keepers, Road Runners, Tallymen advisors, to Tawich Construction, Tawich Development, to the Canadian Rangers, SOPFEU, the international Firefighters, the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Health Board and all of the cooks and volunteers, for their dedication and service to our community. We thank each and every one of you, for your contributions and assistance.

In the weeks prior to the forest fires, Wemindji had a forest fire in the community that spread behind Maquatua Road, the clinic and which took several days to extinguish. Our Public Safety and Fire Department worked quickly to mobilize and respond to the incident, and I would like to thank them. We are also grateful for the assistance from our neighbours, who sent a team of firefighters from Eastmain. Thank you, Cree Nation of Eastmain for your kind assistance.

Due to the numerous forest fires, most of our capital projects were put on hold, all summer, to concentrate on the KM4 fire barrier. During the first week of August, work resumed on the landfill project and Kakabat Road, towards the new lagoons, along with some drainage work on Hillside Drive and Mayaupiu Street. The new Paint Hills Arena was finalized, and the grand opening was held on September 28, 2023.

The housing shortage in the Cree communities has reached epic proportions. We are in a post-Covid-19 housing crisis, since we were unable to build units for many years. However, we are working on a housing plan. This year, we kicked off Year 2 of our plan which involves the construction of twenty-seven 27 new social-housing units; one duplex, one 4-plex, two 6-plexes, one 8-plex and one 5-bedroom family unit. Many of these new units are bachelor or 2-bedroom units to address the needs of adults without dependants who would like to have their own unit but would not normally qualify for a family-sized housing unit. The progress of our housing plan relies heavily on our ability to develop new housing lots, which will only proceed this summer, with the extension of Niipitakaapuu Street towards the marina area.

One of the major initiatives that the Cree Nation of Wemindji is focused on, is planning. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" (Benjamin Franklin), and we do not plan to fail therefore we are committed to developing long-term plans for our departments. Each department has been working diligently on their planning and we have developed an overall five-year guide for the Cree Nation of Wemindji called the **"Wiichihiwaausinihiikin."**

The *Wiichihiiwaausinihiikin* is the strategic plan that will guide our programs and services, and our goals and objectives, over the next few years. Building on the foundations established in the Vision Statement and Principles of Good Governance and honouring the work of our Elders, in building our values for the organization, the development of the updated Mission, Vision and Values honours the work of the past and ensures that CNW stays grounded in the elements which are core to the work they do to serve the community. Each department has linked their plans with our Vision Statement, and we have determined that as an organization, we will focus on six key guiding principles:

1. Enhancing organizational planning, effectiveness, and implementation
2. Maintaining and preserving our language and culture
3. Facilitating community engagement and communication
4. Building capacity in our people
5. Protecting the land, water, territory, and all living things
6. Promoting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle and advancing the well-being of our people

I am extremely proud of our staff, who have worked hard to ensure that their projects, plans and activities are in line with our Vision Statement and our guiding principles. Our staff have taken ownership of the five-year plan and our Directors are boldly leading their teams in

a clear and unified direction. I appreciate all of the hard work and tireless effort that our teams have put into the development of our “**Wiichihiiwaausinihiikin**.” It is not my plan; it is their plan for the community.

We are all committed to providing the best possible programs and services for our members and we are determined to build capacity in our people. This past year, we created nine new positions to better serve our members and to keep up with the growth and development of Wemindji. We separated the Housing Maintenance team from the Public Buildings Department and created new maintenance positions, including Night Security, and a new Director of Housing role. We also added new positions in Public Safety, Environment, Drinking Water, Wastewater and Capital Works.

We have a common goal, which is to serve our people and work towards building a safe, prosperous, and healthy community. We have a solid foundation in the Vision Statement, our liyuu Values and our Principles of Good Government. Now we must work together towards implementing our plans and building capacity. My goal as the Director General is to develop and build more leaders and internally, our Coordinators, Managers, Supervisors and Directors are all heading in that direction. They are emerging as strong leaders of the community, and I look forward to seeing what they will bring to the table in the years to come.

Meegwetch—Chiniskumitin—Thank you,

Photo by Katherine Dehm

Treasurer's Report



Shalane Tomatuk

It's my pleasure to submit the annual report on behalf of the Finance Department of the Cree Nation of Wemindji. As Treasurer, I am responsible for planning, forecasting, coordinating, and monitoring the financial affairs of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, and I am accountable for our organization's financial health.

The Financial Statements of the Cree Nation of Wemindji for the year ended March 31, 2024, will be presented at the Annual General Assembly, but I would like to summarize some funding we have received this past year.

GENERAL OPERATING FUND (GOF)

In 2023-2024, the Cree Nation of Wemindji received \$11,432,757 from the federal government to provide services to the community, including the Administration, Governance, Maintenance of Public Buildings, Equipment and Facilities, Public Safety and Fire Dept., Housing Administration, Road and Walkways Maintenance, Environment & Land Management, Economic Development, and Benefits and Counselling Dept. We received an additional \$1,180,182 in O and M funding solely and exclusively for the activities of Water Operations, Eco-Centres and Sewers, Road and Walkways, and Public Building's Asset Management Modernization project. This funding will continue until 2028.

You will find the detailed breakdown of the expenses of these departments in Appendix A of the financial statements.

SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND (SPF)

The Special Projects Fund consists of all departments that have contracts, funding agreements, capital projects and community programming. We had a budget of \$55 million in revenues (including deferred revenues from previous years) in 2023-2024. These include the New Relationship Agreement (SPF-119) for Essential Sanitation Services and Related Infrastructure, Eeyou-Eenou Limited Partnership funds (SPF-122) and the Opimiscow Community Fund (SPF-123) to run programming for our community members. Service agreements and contracts with other entities, such as Niskamoon Corporation, Cree Development Corporation, Transport Canada, etc. are also under SPF. Please refer to Appendix B in section IV of the Financial Statements for the detailed costs of these projects and programs.

HOUSING FUNDS

The Cree Nation of Wemindji received \$1,764,646 for the renovations of social housing. This year, the funds were allocated to the renovation of 23 units. This is the first year of a three-year funding agreement, and the Cree Nation of Wemindji's allocation is to renovate a total of 70 housing units by March 31, 2026. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation may allocate an additional \$15,000 per unit if we meet the specific terms and conditions of the agreement.



Back row: Gary Georgekish, John Mistacheesick, Shalane Tomatuk, Cheryl Weapinecapo, Carla Kakabat.

Front row: Miranda Georgekish, Caroline Kakabat, Norma Shashaweskum, Hannah Georgekish, Leah Mistacheesick.

In addition to the renovations fund, we received \$60,004 from the Reaching Home Program for additional rooms and sanitation services. These funds were allocated to finishing basements in two units under the housing program. The Cree Nation Government confirmed that we will be entering Round IV of the program in 2024-2025.

WEMINDJI PRIVATE SCHOOL AND SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Cree Nation of Wemindji has created a Private School and Special Needs Scholarship Fund. Parents who are Wemindji Band Beneficiaries who wish to send their children to Private School may apply for financial assistance. The Fund also includes assistance for children with Special Needs. Last year, \$30,004 was spent on school tuition fees.

Funding assistance will only be provided for tuition costs or registration fees and does not include travel or other related expenses. For more information concerning this new Scholarship Fund, please don't hesitate to contact me at the Band Office.

In closing, I would like to thank all the employees of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, from the support staff, coordinators, managers, and directors, for their hard work and dedication and for working in collaboration with our Finance Team in maintaining a system of internal controls to ensure we provide reliable financial information. To Cheryl, Hannah, Mara, John, Carla, Norma, Daisy, Miranda, Leah, Caroline, Gary and Ricky, thank you for being a part of our integral success. Your hard work doesn't go unnoticed. To our Director General, Kathy, I'm grateful to work with you and learn under your guidance as I'm still transitioning into my new role. The way you lead is admirable and inspirational. Thank you to our Chief and Council for their continued support. May we all continue to work unitedly in providing the best possible services to our community members.

Human Resources



Brenda Bull, *Director*

This year, as we celebrate Wemindji's 65th Birthday, I would like to recognize the work of our past leaders and the vital roles employees have played over the years. I will reflect on the growth of the community, its public programs, services and facilities. On March 31, 2024, the Cree Nation of Wemindji employed 169 employees.

Our report highlights the past year's workplans, HR activities initiated from new funding agreements, new services and the CNW organizational changes. The HR teams worked well despite the delays caused by forest fires over a few months. We implemented the first year of the strategic plan, and the following six guiding principles.

1. Enhancing organizational planning, effectiveness, and implementation.
2. Maintaining and preserving our language and culture.
3. Facilitating community engagement and communication.
4. Building capacity in our people.
5. Protecting the land, water, territory, and all living things.
6. Promoting and maintaining healthy lifestyles and advancing the well-being of our people.

Organization changes: The following details organizational changes that took place within each of the public service departments.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- Added a Janitor position to the Community Hall.
- Created a Program Coordinator - Wellness position.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

- Added a Wastewater Operator.
- Created two Water Distribution Operator positions and a Program Coordinator position.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT CREATED A HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER POSITION

- Public Buildings and Maintenance department added the following positions.
- Inventory Clerk position.
- Two Building Security positions.
- Capital Assets Coordinator.
- Two Building Technicians.

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

- Created a Director of Housing position.
- Added two Local Housing Inspector positions from the Public Buildings.
- Housing Administrator position title changed to Coordinator of Social Housing Programs
Housing Clerk position title changed to Tenant Relations Officer.

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

- Created a Public Safety Coordinator position.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

- Added an additional Operator/Bus Driver.

Our projects consisted of capacity building, carried out through work experience programs and training and development initiatives, aligned with the guiding principles.

ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING, EFFECTIVENESS, AND IMPLEMENTATION

TECHNICAL PROJECTS

- Improvements on Technology infrastructure
- Upgrades of work tools and adopting new programs
- Centralizing documentation into an intranet

PROJECT MANAGEMENT ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Eighteen employees completed the essential modules in Project Management and obtained a certificate from Algonquin College.

PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND ADVANCING THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE

- Employee themed activities
- Attended mental health workshops
- Promotion of healthy practices and training
- Employee recognition banquet on employee's achievements and service milestones

BUILDING CAPACITY IN OUR PEOPLE

TRAINING PROJECTS

The following students completed the accounting program with Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Students: Angelina Kakabat, Brenda Bull, Brenda Napash, Cherilyn Georgekish, Cheryl Georgekish, John Mistacheesick, Lee Ann Gilpin and Roslyn Tomatuk.

ON-THE-JOB WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING PROJECT

The following completed the year 2 on the maintenance lineman training project.

Trainees: Andrew Mistacheesick, Aaron Visitor, Brandon Georgekish, Gordon Visitor, Jarrett Mark, Kevin Kakabat, Linden Namagoose, and Robert Miniquaken.

WORK EXPERIENCE PROJECT - CREE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Darryl Napash-Pachanaos, works with the Capital Works department and is working on the GIS, Land registry and field work for the department. We are glad to have him as part of the team. Darryl graduated from Algonquin College with a Construction Engineering Technician Diploma.

FACILITATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- Rebranding the Cree Nation of Wemindji website by including service information that is located at wemindji.ca
- Promoting announcements on Wemindji Misinihiichaaaukimikw page
- Participated at public consultation meetings
- Our HR team was accompanied by representatives of the Council, the Director General and a few community members at the Cree School post-secondary conference.
- Attended the local career fair hosted by the Youth Council and Economic Development department at the Maquatuta Eeyou school. We had the opportunity to connect with students and explain the services and professions within the Cree Nation of Wemindji.

ACTIVITIES

April - Post-secondary Student conference.

June - External surveillance audit

June - Staff Recognition Banquet

July - HR team also assisted the services in Amos and Quebec City September - Members General Assembly

November - International Men's Day luncheon

December - Christmas Staff Banquet

March - International Women's Day luncheon and General staff meeting



Women's Luncheon Group



Juliet Asquabaneskum Retirement



Men's Luncheon Group

RECOGNITION BANQUET 2023

RETIREEES

Linda Stewart, Phyllis Tomatuk, Juliet Asquabaneskum and Sammy Hughboy

YEARS OF SERVICE

- **15 years:** Diana Shashaweskum and Mara Mayappo
- **20 years:** Christina Atsynia and Elmer Atsynia
- **25 years:** Gregory Visitor, Derek Mark, Kevin Kakabat, Victor Blackned and Cheryl Weapinicappo
- **30 years:** Norma Shashaweskum



Phyllis Tomatuk Retirement

HIGHLIGHTS ON OUR COLLEAGUES

First, I would like to congratulate Phyllis on her retirement and wish her the best on her new chapter in her life. Her presence in the workplace is greatly missed, she exemplified a work ethic that we all learned from.

Lianna Cheezo Visitor, joined the HR team as the Interim Quality Coordinator. During her replacement, she assisted on the external audit, numerous projects and completed the training as internal auditor and Project Management. We wish Lianna well on her success on her education leave of absence.

Kristy Ann Mark, was our receptionist replacement, who recently moved onto a new role. We all wish her well on the new role.

Arlene started a new role within the department, as Human Resources Manager is to assist the department, the main areas in recruiting, training and development, and onboarding new employees.

Welcoming new staff is always exciting time. The following joined our team throughout the year.

Arianna and Shania officially join the secretarial team and main duties is to provide administrative support to the departments.

Norman Mistacheesick is our new janitor at the administration office, it is nice to have him part of the team.



IN MEMORY OF RUSTY STEWART

Maintenance Worker and our colleague. A champion, whose work served the Housing, Public Buildings department, the daycare centre, homeowners and other community entities. We will remember his kindness and service within the community. Rusty was a volunteer for the public safety department and a volunteer fire fighter/first responder. He also supported children's activities within our childcare programs and facilities. He was talented in making traditional tools for walking-out ceremonies. His presence and participation in recreational activities will be missed.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the department, we thank Tyra Gilpin and Shania Matoush who joined the team under the Youth work experience program, and Michelle and Rihanna Swallow from the summer employment program.

In closing, I take this time to recognize our team for the support and coordination of activities throughout the year.

June 2023	PME 2 - Resource, Communications and Stakeholder Management
June 2023	PME 3 - Project Schedule and Cost
August 2023	PME 4 - Project Risk Management
September/October 2023	PME 5 - Project Quality Management
August/December 2023	PME 6 - Procurement and Contract Management
February 2024	PME 7 - Project Implementation and Closure



Left back

Norman Mistacheesick (Janitor), Christopher Gull-Mark (IT Technian), Sydney Mark (Secretary), Arlene Hughboy (HR Manager), Tassa Danyluk (IT Technian)

Front left

Deborah Diamond (HR coordinator), Victoria Mistacheesick (Janitor), Brenda Bull (HR Director), Dinah Shanush (Secretary), Shania Matoush (Secretary).



The employees completed the modules in Project management through virtual training sessions with Algonquin College.



PME Group

Environment and Lands Management



Howard MacDonald
Director

Projects under the lens of Environment

As the world becomes increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of human activities, numerous projects are being developed and examined, through the lens of sustainability, to reduce carbon footprints, preserve natural resources and promote ecological balance. The ongoing evaluation and adaptation of these projects ensure that they meet environmental standards and drive positive change

The 2023 summer affected us all, including the land, with major impacts on traplines that were significantly damaged by the fires. Through the hard work of the people involved locally and across the region, people stayed unharmed, and the communities remained safe. Fire barriers were constructed to help stop the spread of wildfire. With the cooperation of those involved, environmental concerns were taken into consideration. Subsequently, we came to see that in an emergency, when human safety is the priority, normal environment assessment procedures can become unapplicable, within reason.

Environmental Social Impact Assessments (ESIA): What are they?

Section 22 of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) establishes an environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure (ESIA procedure). It is designed to make sure that the impacts of development projects are assessed at the preliminary stage, before any irrevocable decisions are made. Projects shall be planned and developed in compliance with Section 22 of the JBNQA ESIA procedures. Eeyou Istchee is protected by an environmental and social protection regime. It protects the rights and

guarantees foreseen under the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regime (JBNQA, Section 24), and the Cree people, their economy and the wildlife resources upon which they depend. It is the responsibility of the proponent to verify whether their project is listed under Schedule 1 or 2 of the JBNQA Section 22, if an assessment is required.

The Greenhouse pilot project was successful, and the future looks optimistic for more greenhouses. The project was funded by the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, in the amount of \$598,747 and worked with the distributor, Green Iglu. Through Green Iglu, Wemindji procured a 42-foot growing dome that included all materials necessary for the construction of the greenhouse and for the online training of two greenhouse technicians, Mackenzie Bull and Lindsey Kitchicappo. Shirlene Mistacheesick also played a crucial role during the project. The grand opening took place in September and the final harvest was in October. Michelle Georgekish was our SSEP during the summer, and she did excellent work with minimal supervision.

Under the Local Environment Administrator (LEA) Committee, discussion was had around the need for training opportunities through capacity building in our Environment Departments. CNG provided training through the EcoCandas BEAHR Training Program, with two separate dates for the Environment Core Skills training, compulsory for most BEAHR training courses. Shirlene Mistacheesick and George Michael Matoush from CNW attended. After the Core Skills training was completed, the students then had the option to continue with the Solid Waste Coordinator and Mr. Matoush attended.



The Environment Core Skills course was offered again, as was the option to attend the second training in Environment Monitoring Part 1: Research and Part 2: Regulatory. Both Mackenzie Bull and Charly Gilpin, from CNW, attended all courses.

As part of the Department's work plan, an Emergency Spills Response training was needed and two separate training courses were taken within the Department, one through Risk Management and Emergency Planning, and the second with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador of Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI). An Emergency Response Spills Manual was provided to the Department.

Project Management Essentials professional training was provided by the CNW. It started pre Covid-19 and the pandemic impacted the course's duration. Nonetheless, the course was completed in March 2024.

In June 2022, employees were nominated to the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, for a two-year term. Ensuring the health and safety of the employees of the CNW, the three

nominated employees met once a month and inspected the CNW building twice a month.

One of the highlights from the Climate Change Advisory Committee was attending the Adaptation Futures Conference, which had Indigenous speakers from around the world, speaking about Indigenous-led projects and Indigenous knowledge.

As the Director of Environment, I was appointed as the Eeyou Planning Commissioner for Wemindji in July 2023. Immediate discussions began around important matters that considered land use planning with the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (EMRPC), Protected Areas, and the National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA).

The Opinagow Environment Committee (OEC) is a collaboration between VC 29, CNW, Newmont Eleonore and CNG. Our highlight was a mine site tour, visiting most of the facilities, including a tour of the underground. The quarterly meetings consist of discussions around environmental and social impact matters at Elenore Mine, which also include affected traplines, VC-29, 28 and 22.





DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER DEPARTMENTS

2023/2024 CNG Supplementary Operational and Maintenance Budget – Water and Wastewater: \$500,000 (Spent within budget)

As part of capacity building, new employment was created, and each department was provided training opportunities by the Cree Nation Government. Training programs that were provided:

Enclosed Space Training:

Justin Otter, Alvin Katapatuk, Trent Georgekish and Wayne Tomatuk

Wastewater Training (OW-2 Certificate):

John Kakabat, Trent Georgekish, Edmund Kakabat, Sherman Visitor

Distribution Training (OPA Certificate):

Justin Otter, Floyd Gilpin

WASTEWATER

Wayne Tomatuk, *Wastewater Operator*

DRINKING WATER

Justin Otter, *Distribution Operator*

Floyd Gilpin, *Distribution Operator*

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Eugene Hughboy, *Waste Assistant*

Ross Miniquaken, *Waste Assistant*

Drinking Water/Wastewater Sampling Performance Review - CNG Dashboard (January 2023 to September 2023)

Drinking water sampling	Drinking water samples as per regional sampling plan and Colilert tests	83%
Wastewater sampling	Influent and effluent samples as per regional sampling plan	83%
Staff	Staff information updates and attended training	100%
Leak detection and network maintenance	Leak detection campaign and repairs, drawings updated and Capital O&M investment	87%
Overall performance		88%



I would like to acknowledge Bill Stewart for all the hard work he provided over the years at the Water Department, and I wish him the best in his future endeavours.

Environmental Health Department

2023-2024 CNG Supplementary O&M Budget
- Waste Management: \$152,000 (Spent within budget)

RECYCLING COSTS

Recyclable material delivery to Chibougamau Groupe Ungava: \$60,000

Used oil delivery to Rouyn Noranda AmNor Industries: \$14,000

Community clean-up of used oil to Rouyn Noranda AmNor Industries: \$257,000

MAJOR PURCHASES

- Excavator
- 3 new pick-up trucks
- New garbage truck (First Nations Waste Management Initiative) \$440,000

- 26-foot shelter dome: \$16,000
- Recycle containers with doors: \$20,000
- Two hazardous waste containers: \$50,000
- Residential waste and recycle bins

DONATIONS

- Christmas banquet
- New Year's extravaganzas
- Hockey minor tournament
- Wemindji spring clean up

IMPROVEMENTS

- Recycle containers so that recyclable material will be protected from the weather
- Hazardous waste containers to avoid spills and contamination
- Numbering of all the bins for residential use so they won't be mixed up
- Training opportunities performed locally and south visits.

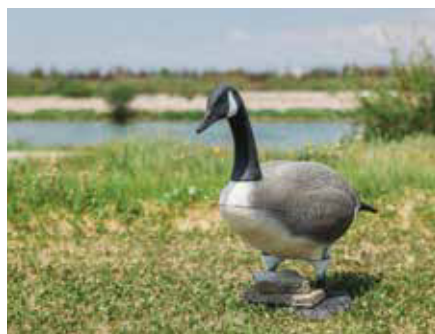




Photo by Katherine Dehm

Housing Administrator

Clarence Miniquaken

I present to you the Housing Department Activity Report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. There has been a high turnover in the Housing Department during this past fiscal year. Prior to me, there were two predecessors working as Interim Rental Housing Administrators, on a contract basis, so I am the third Interim Rental Housing Administrator. I started working in the Housing Administration near the end, on the February 28, 2024. So, here are the activities that transpired during this past fiscal year.

NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Regarding the new housing construction for the last fiscal year, the Cree Nation of Wemindji has constructed two 6-plexes on Spruce Street which are almost completed, one 4-plex on Spruce Street as well, one duplex on Spruce Street and three duplexes which were prefabricated units on Niipihtaakaapuu Street. There was also the construction of two 8-plexes, where one is strictly for contractual employees and professionals and the other one will be to accommodate our community members, who are on our waiting list. Also, there were single units constructed on 9 Matches Road and 27 Visitor Drive, and one private homeownership located at 113 Niipihtaakaapuu Street.

New Housing 2023-2024



RENOVATIONS

The Cree Nation of Wemindji received funding for renovation projects. Most of these are in the finishing stages and the units that were renovated are at 3 and 6 Bush, 4 Brant Road, 5 Stone, 15 Ratt Avenue, 2 Stone Road, 3 and 11 Porcupine Road, 11 Bush Road, 9 Wachanagan, 35 Maquatua Road, 21 Hillside Drive, 18 Porcupine Road, 17 Bush Road, an apartment building at 40 A, B, C and D Beaver Road, 18 Bush Road, 30 Bush Road, 39 Beaver Road, 32 Bush Road, 5 Hilltop Drive, 25 Porcupine Road, 2 Goose Road. Some of these projects consisted of exterior work but mostly interior renovations were done. There will be exterior renovations up and coming and also interior renovations, for a total of 70 housing units, to be renovated in a three-year time frame. We would like to acknowledge and thank the tenants for their understanding about the renovation projects that were carried out within a tight time frame. Their compliance with the moving out and moving in dates has been phenomenal. This has been a unique experience with the department to have such a tight deadline to accomplish these projects.

Before renovations



After renovations



NEW RENT SCALE

As part of the agreement to access the funding for the new housing initiative, each and every community was mandated to update their rent scale(s). This was the main reason why there are new rent rates this past fiscal year. The original CMHC agreement was 25% of household income and our new rent scale is calculated at 15% of household income. See below for the new rent scale and rent rates for each income bracket of the Cree Nation of Wemindji.

In closing, I would like to thank the predecessors, this past fiscal year, for contributing to the Housing Administration, as their role in the department was appreciated and valued. Your contribution to the Cree Nation of Wemindji Housing Administration was key in the development of the new rent scale, the renovation projects, and the new housing construction funding. Thank you! This is my report for this past fiscal year. May we continue to work together for the betterment of our community.

UPDATE OF RENT SCALE

In preparation of the new Social Housing Program, we are required to adjust our rent scales to reflect the new program requirements in order to access the new housing funds. The current rent scale does not meet the 15% minimum income.

Current Rent Scale		Current Value
\$0 - 19,000	\$135.00	\$178.00
\$20,000 - 29,999	\$285.00	\$376.00
\$30,000 - 39,999	\$460.00	\$607.00
\$40,000+	\$595.00	\$785.00
W1-units	\$695.00	\$917.00
Rent Scale for Old CMHC Units		
Employed	\$300.00	
Not employed	\$135.00	

Note: This scale has not been adjusted in 15+ years.

Proposed Rent Scale for All Units				Implementation	
Household Income Level	Current Rent	15% Income Policy	Proposed Scale	Effective April 1, 2023	Effective April 1, 2024
\$0 - 19,999	\$135.00	\$187.50	\$160.00	\$147.50	\$160.00
\$20,000 - 24,999	\$285.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$250.00
\$25,000 - 29,999	\$285.00	\$312.00	\$300.00	\$292.50	\$300.00
\$30,000 - 34,999	\$460.00	\$375.00	\$375.00	\$375.00	\$375.00
\$35,000 - 39,999	\$460.00	\$437.50	\$430.00	\$430.00	\$430.00
\$40,000 - 44,999	\$595.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
\$45,000 - 49,999	\$595.00	\$562.50	\$560.00	\$560.00	\$560.00
\$50,000 - 54,999	\$595.00	\$625.00	\$625.00	\$610.00	\$625.00
\$55,000 - 59,999	\$595.00	\$687.50	\$680.00	\$637.50	\$680.00
\$60,000 - 64,999	\$595.00	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$672.50	\$750.00
\$65,000 - 69,999	\$595.00	\$812.50	\$810.00	\$702.50	\$810.00
\$70,000+	\$595.00	\$875.00	\$875.00	\$735.00	\$875.00

Paying more than 15%
 Not paying the 15% minimum

Photo by Katherine Dehm

Public Safety



Victor Blackned, *Director*

We are pleased to submit our Cree Nation of Wemindji Public Safety Report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The CNW Public Safety Department has three departments under its umbrella, and each department will have their individual reports presented by its respective manager.

This past year was unprecedented, due to the record number of forest fires that impacted Eeyou Istchee and the whole of Canada. The CNW Public Safety's departmental objectives for the 2023-2024 fiscal year were put on hold until late fall.

The forest fire season started early last year, with a lack of rain and a drought in our region creating ideal conditions for a record-breaking summer of forest fires. The first forest fires occurred in early June and were followed by two huge fires which merged into one that threatened our community, in early July. Through the work of SOPFEU firefighters and international teams, the forest fires were declared "under control" in early October.

The Cree Nation of Wemindji Public Safety Department was in emergency mode, from early June to October. We had to activate our Emergency Operations Centre twice last summer, once in July and once in August, to declare a "State of Emergency." As a result of the dangerous conditions posed by the forest fires, the vulnerable population in our community was evacuated to Quebec City, Amos and Chisasibi.

One of our main objectives was to have First Responder training in the fall of 2023 and we are happy to report that we have added an additional eight First Responders to our team, bringing the total count to twenty-nine members.

Another objective that was completed and is awaiting publicization is the creation of the new and full-time position of Public Safety Coordinator, who will work with the Director of Public Safety.

The following two objectives were not achieved, due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control: the Neighbourhood Watch Program and the "Train the Trainer" for Mental Health Debriefings.

It should be noted that there were personnel reassignments in the Public Safety Department from December 2022 to July 2023. The reassignments are as follows; Arita Mark as Interim Director of Public Safety, and Elizabeth Shashaweskum as Interim Public Health Officer.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

In December of 2022, the Ambulance Service Agreement between the Cree Nation of Wemindji and the Cree Health Board was extended for an additional 5 years.

With this Agreement, CNW Public Safety has contracted out the part-time Coordinator position to Elizabeth Shashaweskum, who has been an asset to our department since she joined the team during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the number of interventions throughout the year, one of our objectives was to train our team in mental health debriefings so that we can better deal with the calls we encounter. Unfortunately, we were unable to have this training session, but it will be our focus for this coming year.

The following are the statistics for the past fiscal year.

Interventions: 376 - Ambulance calls (local, Medevac and Chisasibi hospital transports)

Police Assistance: 3 - Accidents/Incidents (vehicular and others)

Training Sessions: 1 - New recruits (eight candidates successfully completed the training).

RESCUE BOAT UPDATE

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a delay in the fabrication process and in receiving specialized equipment for the boat. We are happy to announce that the rescue boat is in its final stages of completion and will be assessed by the fabrication team, this spring. The delivery date is set for late June, and it will be commissioned for soon after.

With the acquisition of the rescue boat, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary along with CNW Public Safety started a recruiting campaign for personnel, in March. There are now ten potential candidates for an upcoming training session, this August.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

Submitted by: Gregory Visitor, *Fire Chief*



The Fire Department had several trainings this past 2022-2023 year. To name a few, we had a training on the refilling system for our SCBA tanks, which we had nine firefighters complete. NFPA 1001 (Basic Firefighter) training had two candidates, and one is on his way to getting his

certification. Future trainings will concentrate on Officers Trainings Level 1 and 2, along with Fire Prevention.

The Fire Department was in emergency mode, throughout the summer, from June to October 2023, responding and assisting SOPFEU and international forest firefighting teams that were assigned to our region, to help with the fires.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Submitted by: **Arita Mark**, *Public Health Officer*

Working with the Miyupimaatisiun Committee, I was appointed to be a member, as I was an observer before. Our committee's goal is to link and coordinate collaborative work with community entities. Also under my department is Animal Care and Control. This past year we have seen a decrease in dog registration. Our objective next year is to more actively promote registrations, due to the importance of providing services, such as vaccinations for dogs. Our biggest setback is updating the animal bylaws, and this will be our focus when we hire our new Animal Care and Control Officer.

On a final note, we are always looking to hire recruits, for both the Fire Department and the First Responder Service. If you wish to serve your community, drop by the firehall, and meet our team members and start the process for an application.

Thank you all for your continuous support to our team. Serving our community takes its toll on the mental health of our responders and the smallest gesture of encouragement goes a long way!

WACHIYA!

"WHEN WE STRIVE TO BECOME BETTER THAN WE ARE, EVERYTHING AROUND US BECOMES BETTER TOO." - Paulo Coelho

AIRPORT

Submitted by: Lawrence Ratt, *Interim Airport Manager*

EMPLOYEES

Douglas Hughboy, *Observer/Communicator (Full-time)*

James Whiskeychan, *Operator/Maintenance (Seasonal/Casual)*

Ryan Swallow, *Operator/Maintenance (Seasonal/Casual)*

David Ratt, *Operator/Maintenance (Seasonal/Casual)*

Lawrence Ratt, *Interim Airport Manager (Full-time)*

SERVICES PROVIDED

Customer satisfaction is our main priority at the airport and this is established through two contracts with:

1. Transport Canada
2. NAV Canada

Our main goal and objectives at the airport, in collaboration with Transport Canada and the Cree Nation of Wemindji, is to maintain the buildings, runways, taxiways, apron, and all other areas within the property, while trying to both prevent and reduce accidents and incidents around the Wemindji Airport and be prepared for them.

Here is how we prepare:

1. List the risks and dangers.
2. Have staff trained and prepared.
3. Have a safety management system in place that is continually functioning.
4. Review, assess and revise/update the safety management system annually or as needed.

ACTIVITIES AND WORKS COMPLETED IN 2023-2024

September 2023 – Painted the parking lines and handicap zones in the parking area.

August/September 2023 – Annual inspections of all airport equipment.

October 2023 – Inspection of buildings and surrounding airport perimeter, by engineers and architects, to review deficiencies.

November 2023 to April 2024 – Snow removal

December 2023 – Winter Maintenance Training

March 2024 – Airport Wildlife Management Training

March 2024 – CQSMS02 Introduction to Safety Management System 2024

March 2024 – CQHFA01 Human Factors in Aviation 2024

March 2024 – Replaced Runway 10's windsock tower.

2024 – 2025 WORKS PLANNED

May/June – Spring cleanup

June/July – Repairs and refill/Patch gravel areas of runway/taxiway/apron June/July - Dust control application

August/September – Airport equipment inspections

July/August/September – Paint airport access road lines

September/October – Slashing/brush cutting

November/April – Snow removal, daily maintenance, and reporting October/January – Work will be done on both buildings.

TRAININGS 2023-2024

December 2023 – Winter Maintenance Training

December 2023 – Tabletop exercise (Emergency Response Plan)

March 2024 – On-site Controller Training

March 2024 – Airport Wildlife Management Training.

March 2024 – CQSMS02 Introduction to Safety Management System March 2024 – CQHFA01- Human Factors in Aviation

2023 -2024 YEARLY STATISTICS WEMINDJI (CYNC) AIRPORT

2023-2024	Arrival	Departure	Total Movements
April 2023	64	64	128
May 2023	60	60	120
June 2023	65	65	130
July 2023	81	81	162
August 2023	69	69	138
September 2023	55	55	110
October 2023	73	73	146
November 2023	67	66	133
December 2023	56	56	112
January 2024	60	60	120
February 2024	55	55	110
March 2024	62	62	124
GRAND TOTAL	767	766	1533

I want to thank you for taking time to read the 2023-2024 Annual Report. On behalf of all the staff at the Wemindji Airport, I wish you all good health and an enjoyable summer!



Public Buildings and Housing Maintenance



Philip Mistacheesick
Director

Wachiya,

As the Director of Public Building & Maintenance for the Cree Nation of Wemindji, it is an honour and privilege to report on our department's operations and projects for 2023-2024.

Our department's main objective is to ensure that we always create a safe workplace environment for the members of Wemindji and the employees of our facilities, throughout the different seasons we experience. To ensure we can provide the highest levels of services, we have had to adjust our delivery of services, depending on the needs of the users of the facilities and the tenants of the residential units, under the responsibility of the Cree Nation of Wemindji.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Department of Public Buildings and Maintenance ensures a safe working environment, by conducting the necessary tasks of monitoring the useful lifespan of each facility under our responsibility, with the collaboration of eight field maintenance technicians and managers. This includes both the public buildings and residential units and involves different types of procedures for management requirements. The management of residential units needs to coordinate with the Housing Department, for which a review will be conducted soon. The Housing Maintenance Department maintains about 330 band and social housing units and 28 public buildings, in the community.

I would like to remind to our tenants to avoid approaching the maintenance staff or housing administration personnel during nonworking hours or during their personal time off, as this information is not documented in our system. I invite tenants to come by the maintenance office, located on the west side of the administration building, from Monday to Friday 9 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm. It is important

that your requests be documented and entered in our work order tracking system.

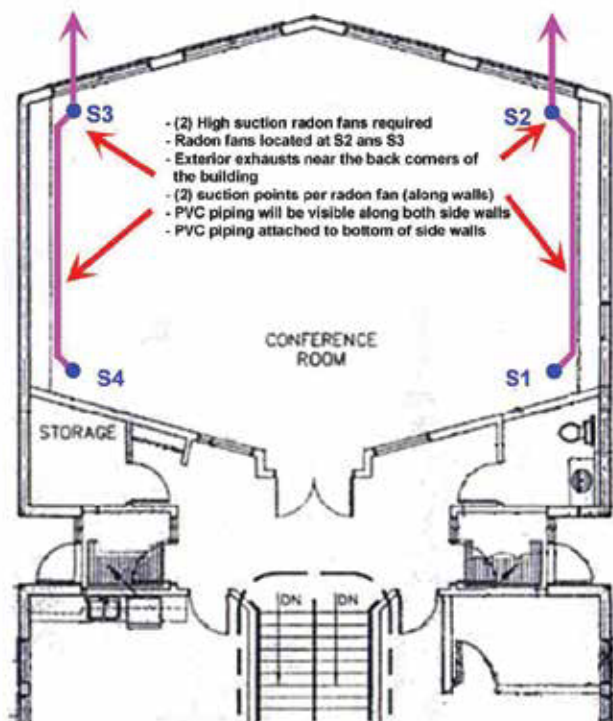
CMMS INTERNAL SOFTWARE

With the purchase of the new CMMS software, the plan to make the Public Building Maintenance Department paperless in the long run will eventually be reached. We are still using paper documents and the CMMS software at the same time, but we will phase out the paper documents eventually.

The new CMMS software is a unique tool that keeps a track record of work order status, completion, hours, inventory, or parts used, and much more. It will help our department be more efficient, with less time spent looking for parts and keeping track of stocked parts, as well. It is also available on a mobile app accessible on phones, making filling out work orders much more effective for maintenance staff and personnel.

We've been working with AMMCO, a Montreal-based company, for the past couple of years, with our preventive maintenance software. They've been working very hard, this past fiscal year on tagging all the mechanical equipment for all 28 Cree Nation of Wemindji-owned public buildings, with a whopping total of 1265 pieces of equipment tagged during that process and likely more to be added in the coming years. They continue to build and import the annual and seasonal preventive maintenance for each piece of equipment into the software. A total of 791 work orders will likely be performed during one fiscal year for the Public Building Department as part of the preventive maintenance plan. This number will likely increase as Paint Hills Arena was recently added into the software. We plan to renew the service offers from AMMCO into the next fiscal year and work with other departments that are willing to go down that route with us, as well. I'm not ready to take off the training wheels just yet.

I am looking forward to working with this new software acquired by our department and I hope to present a few slides during this year's Annual General Assembly, in August 2024.



Above: concept drawing from Radon Solutions.

RADON PUBLIC BUILDINGS

In January 2021, the Public Buildings Department conducted Radon testing for 4 buildings: the administration building, the community hall, the youth centre, and the sport complex were among the building that were selected as these buildings are frequently used daily. A total of 66 Radon test devices were strategically placed, for each building. Out of 66 devices, only the administration building had overly high amounts of Radon, this being the Chief and Council room on the north side of the building.

On February 24, 2023, Radon Solutions from Maniwaki, Quebec conducted a suction test on the Chief and Council room. A suction test consists of drilling multiple holes into the concrete, and one test hole should be 2 inches

where the vacuum is placed. Once the vacuum is turned on, the testing instrument is placed onto each test hole, to measure the amount of air underneath the slab being drawn to the vacuum. The test that was conducted concluded that two fans need to be installed on either side of the room, to mitigate it. A picture of the concept drawing from Radon Solutions has been submitted. We hope that we are given the go ahead to start the project, in the next fiscal year.

2023 AND 2024 PROJECTS

- Youth Centre radiant flooring
- Annual fire inspection (Chubb Fire & Security)
- 33 Garage door repairs and annual maintenance
- Purchase of a new CNW sign (installation deferred to next fiscal year)
- Purchase of 2 new CNW work trucks
- Purchase of 15 new air purifiers for public buildings (3 different sizes)
- HEPA and Merv 8 filter (smoky conditions)
- New metal C-container storage
- Purchase of 12-foot by 60-foot mobile office
- Prolon demo kit (computerized ventilation system)
- Purchase of scrubber for our Custodian worker
- Internal training

THREE-YEAR HOUSING RENOVATION PLAN

The Housing Department was allocated new funding from the Cree Nation Government to renovate 70 units in the span of three years, from April 2023 to March 2026. The first year, CNG required the housing department to renovate 23 units during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The second year, 2024-2025, remains the same, with 23 units. And during the third and final year, 2025-2026, 24 units need to be renovated, with a grand total of 70 units, in the span of three years.

We faced many challenges, in the first year of implementing the three-year housing renovation plan, but I'm happy to report that we are close to finishing the units that were selected during the first year, despite having a late start due to the many challenges we faced during the summer.

With the funding that was received from Reaching Homes, we were able to build two additional rooms and a washroom for two units, during our renovation plan. We selected housing units that have a high number of occupants.

I personally would like to say thank you to my awesome Renovation Committee team, to our contractors, to our tenants and to the Public Works Department for a job well done. We are looking forward to working together again, this next fiscal year.

The following work was allocated to Paul Davis Mold Restoration to renovate the interior of 10 units.

- 5 Stone
- 2 Stone (*Approved to build 2 rooms and a washroom in the basement.*)
- 15 Ratt Avenue
- 4 Brant
- 3 Porcupine (*Approved to build 2 rooms and a washroom in the basement.*)
- 3 Bush Road
- 6 Bush Road
- 11 Porcupine
- 11 Bush
- 9 Wachanagan.

Vieux Comptoir Construction was allocated 10 exterior finishings.

- 40 Beaver Road Apartment Building (CNG considers as 4 units.)
- 39 Beaver
- 32 Bush
- 30 Bush
- 5 Hilltop Drive
- 4 Shanush Corner
- 7 Shanush Corner
- 25 Porcupine
- 2 Goose Road
- 13 Riverside Drive

We are in the process of planning Year 2 of our renovation plan, with the focus on houses that were never renovated on the interior, and which were built between 1987 and 1997. We would like to ask our tenants to be patient, as our Housing Department is working hard to meet our goals and objectives. We are striving to make our homes into healthier living environments.

As always, I would like to keep my yearly tradition of providing maintenance tips to our tenants, homeowners and members.

TIPS ON PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS BY SEASON

SPRING

- Please be sure to have your belongings stored away from your house, in case the spring thaw causes your basement to flood.
- The water line valve, electrical panel, and sump pit should always be accessible, in case of emergency.
- Clean your air exchanger every six months with warm water and dry install the core. Also, vacuum the exhaust and intake, which is located on the exterior of your house. Inspect if the motor is running smoothly and, if not, unplug the air exchanger and call the maintenance clerk to have it serviced. Avoid parking your ATV, Skidoo, or any gas containers in front of the air exchanger intake, as it can circulate the carbon monoxide or gas fumes into your home.
- Please clean and vacuum the excess lint that accumulates in your dryer and dryer vent in order to prevent fire. Note: Dryer lint is extremely flammable.
- Please install your air conditioner correctly by following the manufacturer's recommendation. I would like to remind you that an air conditioner produces water condensation, which can cause water damage in your homes if not properly installed.

FALL

- Clean and vacuum your dryer and dryer vent. This should be done regularly.
- Vacuum up the dust built up in and around your washroom fan by unplugging the device. This will prevent the fan from breaking down.

WINTER

- Please be sure to have a 4-foot clearance around your oil furnace.
- Avoid storing items close to the baseboard heaters.
- Make sure to remove your hose from your exterior hose bib as the freezing temperature will cause the water that is trapped inside the hose bib to expand, causing damage to your hose bib.
- Inspect the weather strip around your windows and doors.
- Be sure to report a broken door sweep as cold air can come through.
- Always make sure that all windows are closed during the cold winter months.
- Avoid turning your furnace thermostat on and off during the cold months. Always set the control between 20 °C to 25 °C, whichever feels comfortable to the user.

ELECTRICAL

- Always report broken light fixtures, plugs, switches and covers.
- Avoid making an electrical upgrade.
- Clean your kitchen range hood fan regularly.

HOMEOWNER MAINTENANCE ADVICE

- If your hot water tank is more than 10 years old, it's time to replace it with a new tank.
- If the colour of the treated wood on your balcony is starting to fade, it's time to recoat it with exterior stain or paint, to extend the life of your balcony and the wood itself.
- Always have spare parts for plumbing fixtures.

- Be mindful of where the main water line valve is or shut off valves, in case of a busted pipe or leaks.
- If replacing a door, make sure to measure the door before buying a new door.
- Avoid pouring grease down the drain as it will cause your plumbing system to clog and the repairs to your home can be costly.
- Use LED light bulbs to reduce electricity consumption.



IN MEMORY OF RUSTY STEWART

The Cree Nation of Wemindji Maintenance Staff were saddened to hear of the loss of our fellow colleague, Rusty Stewart, in the fall of 2023. Rusty worked for the Cree Nation of Wemindji Maintenance Department for many years and in September 2023 he submitted his letter of retirement. Sadly, he passed away just days after submitting his letter.

Rusty was a very dedicated Maintenance Worker/Electrician/Furnaceman/Carpenter/Public Buildings Technician. He was my Jack-of-all-trades-kind-of-guy, who I would rely on to service many work orders. He would often have to respond to calls from tenants, during the cold winter season, to repair their furnaces and he would often work late in the evening to make sure tenants were comfortable. On many occasions, we called him to help us with a service call that we had trouble with, and he would always provide a helping hand. I would like to personally say thank you to his family for sharing Rusty, while he was still with us, as the work he did took him away from his personal family time.

I had the honor and privilege of working with him since April 2023, during my tenure as a Maintenance Worker, Maintenance Supervisor and Director. He was one of the many in our department that played a huge role in providing his expertise, knowledge, and guidance by teaching the new guys. We will surely miss his sense of humour in our department.

Until we meet again my friend, colleague, Dad, First Responder partner, and Firefighter Captain. We are definitely missing your presence here at the office and maintenance workshop.

Public Works



Wayne Morrison, *Director*

It is a great pleasure to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report, on behalf of the Public Works Departments:

- CNW Municipal Garage
- Road and Walkways
- Energy Systems

I think we all learned a great deal over the last year.

As the old saying goes, “you learn something new every day.” Some of which is not planned for, some of which is planned, some is learned as we go, some is learned through mistakes, and other lessons are had by trial and error.

The fires of 2023 were not planned but made us learn in so many ways, about teamwork, communication, patience, coordination, preparedness, anticipation, dedication, safety, commitment, kindness, respect, etc. Like all other CNW Departments, we will try to continue the positive things we learned and to improve, build on, and correct the negative things.

Unfortunately, in 2023-2024, a great deal of the plans in our personal and professional lives, were interrupted as well, and ended up being postponed, delayed, or cancelled. The effects were seen, over the year, on the Department's goals and objectives. It was hard to move forward and get back to normal, right away, because of all the overtime accumulated and that needed to be taken, in order to give the crews and workers a rest.

Some of the tasks we assisted with, and participated in during the forest fires that took up so much of our time, included:

- Assisting in fighting fires (All Public Works Departments, and personnel assisted in one way or another)
- Setting up evacuation spaces

- Transportation of evacuees
- Fire Barrier Project
- Removing trees and vegetation along access road and fibre optic line.
- Repairs, and major inspections of all machinery after each fire.
- Reporting time, and costs for fires.
- Many meetings for planning, coordination, communication at different levels.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Department Budgets: managed or co-managed or shared:

- Mini Dam
- Heavy Equipment Revolving Fund
- Road and Walkways
- CNW Garage
- Energy Systems
- Lineman Training

MINI DAM

- The Capital Works Department conducted studies for the structural integrity and spillway overflow, and we are waiting results and a final report from Stantec before a decision can be made on how to proceed.
- There was just a seal that needed replacing, but we may have more problems now because it has been sitting idle for so long.
- The Hydro-Québec agreement and the sale of electricity to them is also something that is still pending and awaiting the engineering report.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT REVOLVING FUND

These are funds that we receive yearly for heavy equipment, and this was pretty much spent (January/February 2024) as soon as we received notification of the amount by the Cree Nation Government.

From January 2024 to April 2024, the funds were used to cover outstanding equipment purchases, a certain percentage for the Environment Department's bulldozer and the Road and Walkways new dump truck that will be available this summer for delivery.

ENERGY SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT & LINEMAN TRAINING

Personnel include:

- **Kevin Kakabat**, *Lineman/Electrician*
- **Gordon Visitor**, *Lineman/Electrician*
- **Linden Namagoose**, *Trainee*
- **Jarrett Mark**, *Trainee*
- **Brandon Georgekish**, *Trainee*
- **Robert Miniquaken**, *Trainee*
- **Andrew Mistacheesick**, *Trainee*
- **Aaron Visitor**, *Trainee*

The Trainees have been working alongside the full-time employees since the fall of 2022, continuing to perform and complete work order requests, repairs and monthly meter readings. One of the first things I tried to do when leading the team was ordering the crew proper safety clothing, safety gear and tools. (There are still little odds and ends we are working on). I also set up a session with them to watch Lineman videos, of pole climbing, gear, safety, and techniques (Summer 2023).

Last August, I set up training for the energy systems guys for this coming year (April 2024 and August 2024) Level 1 and 2, Apprenticeship Lineman. In October 2023, I contracted an instructor to conduct pole climbing training. (All the guys participated and received their certificates). We enrolled the trainees/employees in some online training that included 5 1/2 day sessions (total), that began in October 2023 and continued into 2024.

- Powerline Safety
- Crane Safety
- Arc Flash Safety

- Ladder Safety
- Electrical Safety Awareness

These are just basic trainings, and all trainees and employees received their certificates for the training sessions in February 2024.

In December, Hydro-Québec finally said they would get on board with training (still pending), and they have recently put us in contact with people who can assist with some of our needs and requests (suppliers and contractors). The certified Lineman training is only presently available in French in Quebec, so we will continue with training at IHSA, in Ontario. If Hydro-Québec gets involved; we will also take advantage of this and have them participate in training our crew.

CNW MUNICIPAL GARAGE

On behalf of the CNW Garage Department, I am pleased to submit the 2023-2024 Annual Report. The Garage Department consists of 4 fulltime employees: Rita Atsynia (Cleaner), David Visitor: (Heavy Equipment Mechanic), Darren Mathews: (Parts Clerk), Darryl Gilpin: (Mechanic, on educational leave) and 2 contract Mechanic employees: Wesley Visitor and Trevor Gilpin, as well as casual employees to assist when needed. We currently have a job posting for a Light Vehicle Mechanic to replace an employee who has moved up.

We basically do the same thing every year. Spring and fall are the busiest seasons at the garage because that's the time to change the tires on all the vehicles. In Quebec, it is mandatory to have winter tires on, from December 1 to March 15. We have a preventive maintenance plan on all the vehicles. We do the oil changes and inspections, to find minor problems before they become major problems. We also do all the maintenance and inspections on the airport equipment, some time in August, to prepare for the winter.

We service both heavy equipment and light vehicles. We have 62 light vehicles and 41 heavy equipment vehicles. We added 15 new light vehicles and 3 new heavy equipment vehicles to the list this past year. There were also 4 old light vehicles and 1 heavy equipment vehicle that were traded.

There were many mechanical inspections completed through the year for the SAAQ certification, and hundreds of work orders completed to help keep the fleet operational. Sometimes we need to ship out vehicles to Val-d'Or or elsewhere, because we don't have all the equipment, training, and tools to do the repairs.

One of my work plans was to provide training for the Mechanics on air conditioning, because we had a few vehicles with A/C problems. That didn't happen, because of all the forest fires in Eeyou Istchee, last summer. We did manage to get training for the Prevost bus, for the Mechanics, in March 2024, in Quebec City. Darren, Wayne and I also had training in Laval on Interl software that will help us in managing the inventory and the work orders. It will also help us on the preventive maintenance plan, so we can keep track of what has been done and what needs to be done. I completed Project Management training (PME) along with other CNW Staff.

I would like to wish everyone a pleasant and successful year. That's all for now.

Elmer Atsynia, *CNW Garage Manager*

ROAD AND WALKWAYS

Greetings to all people of the Cree Nation of Wemindji. I am happy to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report for our community. Every year, we seem to face different challenges to our department. Malcolm Atsynia was hired as a Bus/Operator on October 27, 2023, with three months' probation which ended on January 27, 2024, and he passed his probation.

We want to congratulate and welcome Malcolm to the team:

Jonathan Hughboy, *Operator*

Jason Blackned, *Operator*

Jeffery Natawapineskum, *Bus Driver/Operator*

Gabriel Georgekish, *Groundskeeper*

We also hired three seasonal workers during the winter season to help with the snow removal and workload: Charles Shashaweskum, Joe Shanush, Phillip Georgekish

Mid-year evaluations were done in mid-September 2023. Year-end evaluations were completed before the end of March 2024, as well as setting our goals and objectives. We started quarterly reports based on the results from October to December 2023, and January to March 2024.

ROAD AND WALKWAYS MANDATES

Our main mandates are to maintain the roads and sidewalks, before the operation starts in the community, and pick up debris and garbage on the streets, for transit to run safely during the summer, fall, winter, spring. Operators fill out the heavy equipment daily inspection list and daily equipment report, and close the work order once the work is done.

TASKS WE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE SUMMER/FALL

- Pick up debris, garbage.
- Sweep the streets, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- Grade the unpaved roads (Tawich Road, garbage dump road, part of Riverside Drive, Niipihtaakaapuu Road, Chiikuuchii Road); As well, maintenance of where they cut the paved area: we put calcium to control the dust on gravel roads when needed.
- Work order requests from the departments, entities.
- Assisted on forest fire and worked on fire barrier in June.
- Assisted on another fire barrier around the perimeter of the town from July to August; forest fire was a threat to the community.
- During the forest fires, we helped on transportation for evacuees to the airport.
- Preparing aggregates (soil, Mg20, Mg112, Cg-14), mixed sand and 52 loads of cg-14 for winter stockpile and stored in sand storage building.
- Preparation for winter season and winterizing machinery, trucks, and equipment.

TASKS WE ACCOMPLISHED IN WINTER/ SPRING

- Pick up debris, garbage.
- Maintaining the streets, sidewalks and parking lots, driveways of the assigned buildings, putting sand salt when needed.
- Every year Rental Housing requests snow removal around the housing, on a list, to prevent flooding.
- Snow removal, pushing snow at snow pits to make more room.
- Work order requests from the department, entities.

- Steaming manholes and culverts (March and April).
- Assisting Kakabat Enterprises in some areas because of safety, at the arena before the hockey and broomball tournament, and because he did not have an operational dump truck, sanded the parking lot, walkways.

Road and Walkways assist other departments for projects whether big or small, whenever possible, by hauling, transporting, unloading, loading, soil testing, excavating, landscaping, towing, snow removal during winter and sanding, salting. Some of the departments borrow equipment from us.

ROAD AND WALKWAYS WORK ORDERS FROM APRIL 1, 2023, TO MARCH 31, 2024

No.	Department	# of Work Order
1	Environment and Land	9
2	Environment Health	10
3	Soil Treatment Platform	1
4	Energy System	6
5	Drinking Water	11
6	Waste Water	1
7	Youth Centre	1
8	Arena	13
9	Complex	6
10	C.O.O.L Building	2
11	Culture Department	14
12	Public Safety	4
13	Rental Housing	47
14	Wemindji Trappers Association	7
15	Tawich Construction Inc	1
16	Transport Canada	2
17	Capital Works	1
18	Garage	1
19	Cree Health Board	2
20	Cree School Board	4
21	Others	8
TOTAL of work orders		151

We completed the fencing around the garage yard in the summer of 2023, with the hiring of casual workers under the supervision of the Road and Walkways Supervisor.

In October 2023, a Toromont Caterpillar mechanic from Val-d'Or came to inspect the AWD 140 grader and changed the recalled parts on the machinery and worked on other equipment (snow blower).

2023-2024 PURCHASES

- Crown cement mixer.
- Ordered salt for de-icing and calcium for dust control from Sel Warwick.
- Purchased winter clothing, footwear for the crew from Location Blais.
- Ordered lumber for the Maquatua Bridge, repaired in May 2024.
- In January 2024, purchased a new 10-wheeler dump truck from Mabo Truck Centre INC. in Val-d'Or, Quebec. The truck will be ready in June 2024.
- Received our new 2024 Chevrolet 3500 pick-up from Gareau Auto in Val-d'Or, Quebec.
- In March 2024, we purchased an XLS plow and sandbox at Equipment Twin Inc., for our 2024 Chevrolet 3500; they were Installed on April 24, 2024, at their shop in Anjou, Quebec.

TRAINING

- Project Management for Supervisor completed in February 2024.

TRAININGS THAT WERE POSTPONED IN 2023 WILL BE COMPLETED IN 2024

- First aid
- WHMIS
- Computers
- Fine Grading

Our main goal is safety, wherever we work, and to provide good services to everyone!

We just want to thank everyone who collaborated with us this past year. Keep up the good work for the team!

Roy Ratt, *Supervisor of Road and Walkways*

CLOSING REMARKS

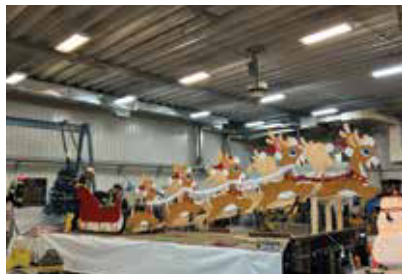
I want to congratulate Roy Ratt, and Elmer Atsynia and the other CNW employees on completing the PME training and receiving their certificates.

I want to acknowledge the Linemen and trainees who have started their Level 1 training and wish them well in advance for the next Levels.

I want to thank the CNW Human Resources Department for their continued help and assistance with the Lineman Training, and progress in this department.

On behalf of The Public Works Department and all its hard-working employees, thank you for taking the time to read our 2023-2024 Annual Report! You never stop learning because tomorrow's a new day!

Hope everyone had a safe and successful harvest.



Garage and Road and Walkways preparing Santa float



CNW Garage Mechanics at work



Jarrett Mark learning how to safety turn Off and On "3 Phase Overhead Switch"



Lineman Training: Pole Climbing



Lineman Training in Mississauga Ontario



Lineman Transferring Knowledge and safety meeting for new Housing Electrical Connections



Lineman Training homework



Lineman Training: Level 1 Apprenticeship in Mississauga Ontario



Road and Walkways Demo



Road and Walkways Operators assisting Water Department



Road and Walkways: Fire Department (Boys with their Toys)

Community Services



Thomas Mark, *Director*

Wachiya,

This past year was very well planned, so as to achieve our department's mission to implement our work plans for each department, in line with CNW's vision and mission statement. However, these plans were interrupted by the dry season, which caused forest fires in our region. As a result, many of the programs and activities for community residents were delayed or cancelled. Some were relocated in the community, and by recommendation, all of the department's summer land-based projects did not happen. It was a tough summer as we (the employees that were here) were all reassigned to the evacuation/shelter centre, once in July and another time in August. Some were stranded in the south and assigned to other areas in Quebec and Amos.

I would say that all of us learned from this experience. It was recommended that our department needs further training in emergency social services, offered to First Nations organizations, and I participated in the training facilitated by the Red Cross, in Montreal, along with the Public Safety and Sports and Facilities teams. It was recommended by the Public Safety team that they coordinate the training, in Wemindji, in the spring. As well, the department managers, coordinators and some support staff have taken the training, in case of any kind of crisis in the future.

A few department staff members completed the Project Management program, offered through Algonquin College, this past year. The skills they learned can be applied to their work plans for current and future projects, coming from the department's goals and objectives for the community population.

There were two departures from Community Services, due to other opportunities within the Cree organization. We will fill the vacated positions when I welcome the new Language Coordinator and the new C.O.O.L Manager.

I continue to lead with the Miiyupimaatisiun Committee, though our term ended in November 2023 and then extended for another year. We must determine if our mandate is to update this or establish a Committee Law, for the upcoming year. We have had a couple of sessions, on route for recommendations.

The other action with the Committee initiative is to have local engagement with entities for potential partnerships with our programs and services.

A working relationship with the Cree Nation Government has been established for awhile now, with both the Miiyupimaatisiun Committees and Chairpersons meeting. This has also happened with local directors on Social and Culture initiatives, in partnership with the Cree Health Board. With Miiyupimaatisiun Groups leading the facilitation, in collaboration with CHB and CSB, for a Chairperson Meeting in the fall, for local priorities and objectives, and in the discussion of roles and responsibilities, the result was a recommendation for training and engagement for the Committees, for the purpose of learning from community and having a committee set-up and purpose. Therefore, in February 2024, a regional session took place as an opportunity for the Committee to participate. A few of the members attended.

With the previous meeting with local directors, it was recommended to have a meeting at least once a year. This year, it took place in January 2024. Some items were discussed: Network and Community Exchange, Cree Language App, Funding Agreement Programs, School Age Programming etc.

During the wintertime, we managed to have a session with my out-of-town team to work on our annual work plans for the department and to review the draft guide for the Community Service department. This was done so that the

new team members will have an idea of where we left off on the development of the plan.

As it was a challenging dry spring and summer last year, my team managed to think outside of the box in order to adjust their activities for the community. You can hear about these in their activity reports, in the next few pages.

As always, the department is always looking to improve our programs and services. We would like your feedback as it is important.



Photo by Katherine Dehm



Waachiiyaouk,

Another successful year has gone by. Greetings to all, from us, here at the Wellness and Culture Department. It is my pleasure to present to you the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Earlier this week, I was reminded of a teaching from the late Elder, Robbie Matthew: *"Everything the Cree people need to heal is on the land."*

With this teaching in mind, the Wellness and Culture Department is committed to delivering more land-based programs to promote Cree traditions and values, paying more attention to promoting our Cree language.

We would like to welcome two members to the department. First, our new Wellness Coordinator Margaret Danyluk, who we are excited to have her on our team, as she brings so much laughter, positive energy, and wonderful ideas. Together with our Mental Health Worker, they are developing and enhancing our mental health programs, based on the needs of the community. Also, Noreen Atsynia has joined our department, as our new Program Assistant. We trust that Noreen's skills and knowledge will greatly benefit our programming and enhance the work we do.

Our services now include interventions, direct counselling, referrals, and a mental health conference.

Below are some activities and events that we've hosted this past year. We thank everyone who has attended our programming and events; you are the inspiration. We also wish to express our gratitude to our partners, who collaborate and contribute to the success of our programs and events.

The Cultural Coordinator has taken a one-year leave. We miss her, and we are looking forward to her return. During the year, she was busy with cultural demonstrations, providing traditional take-out meals for elders, sewing classes and organizing the Old Factory visit from the community.

SUMMARY OF OUR ACTIVITIES

- Land-based programming
- Elder's Annual Christmas Lunch
- Craft nights
- Grab and go traditional meals
- Cultural demonstrations
- Christmas activities
- New Year's Extravaganza
- Winter Journey Walk
- Cultural Week
- Food security meat voucher giveaway
- Expressive art
- Men's and Women's support groups
- Shelter program
- Halloween activities

OUR MISSION

To enhance and support the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of our community.



Left top: Margaret Danyluk (Program Coordinator), Noreen Atsynia (Program Assistant), Marla Blackned (Program Assistant), Samuel Louttit (Program Assistant).

Bottom left: Mickey Decarlo (Mental Health Worker) and Angela Stewart (Wellness and Culture Manager).

Heritage Projects

Valerie Gilpin, Sammy Blackned,
Mary Holly Visitor, Anthony
Georgekish, Katherine Scott

In 2023-2024, the Language Coordinator and a Cree Language and Culture Teacher offered a weekly Hymns and Songs class and an online course for language beginners, throughout the year. Valerie Gilpin was hired as Language Coordinator in February 2024, as the position had been vacant for five months. The Program Assistant was hired in late March. They continue to work on language engagement activities and a community language plan. Heritage Projects team members have jointly completed a Beta

version of Listen! Our Language is in the Land. The team collaborated with the Mapping Project on new oral history recordings. Booklets are planned for some of the stories collected. The proposed cultural building has been revived and an architecture firm (Trame) has been hired to work with the CS Department on the development of a conceptual plan, based on the research conducted about ten years ago, as per Wemindji's Vision Statement and Principles of Good Governance, with some recent updates.



Photo by Katherine Dehm





Greetings from the Youth Department, under Community Services. The following is the Annual Report submission for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Despite the challenging 2023 summer of forest fires in our region, the following listed projects and programs managed to take place, via the Youth Department. The planning of land-based projects, programs and activities during the summer of 2023 was challenging.

PAINT HILL USCHINIICH IIUKIMIKW 2023-2024

- **Adopt a Youth Goose Break Program 2023** was scheduled from May 1 to 12, 2023, with two youths participating in the 2023 program. The program provided grocery vouchers and travel expenses for the participants to join other families during their goose break outing at their traplines.
- **Mental Health First Aid, First Nation Edition** was scheduled June 6, 7, and 8, 2023. Seventeen participants took part in the training for which two Indigenous Instructors came to instruct. The training was a success as it certified more Mental Health First Aiders (both youth and adults) for our community.
- **Summer Student Employment Program 2023** resumed on May 29, 2023, until September 8, 2023 with 124 students enrolled in the program which included returning Post-Secondary, Vocational, Adult Education and High School students, aged 13 and up.
- The SSEP is funded by ASD and under the Youth Program. The amount ASD approved to sponsor to the program was \$258,864.00 and there was a Cree Nation of Wemindji contribution to the program as well.
- **Old Factory River 29th Annual Canoe Expedition 2023.** Despite organizing the expedition, we had no choice but to cancel the activity, due to water running low in the river and forest fire smoke in the region.
- **Youth Summer Camp 2023.** The organizing of the Youth Camp had to be cancelled due to forest fire smoke in the region.
- **Youth Work Experience Program 2023-2024** resumed August 28, 2023, and went until February 23, 2024. A total of twenty three (23) participants were hired for the 2023-2024 program. The participants worked in different departments with the organization and some with other entities. The program had quite a few successes with four youths getting placed within the placements where they worked: two permanent, one replacement and one contractual and two participants reached the maximum of hours eligible under the program. The YWEP is funded by ASD under the Youth Program. The amount ASD approved to sponsor was \$310,249.00 and the Cree Nation of Wemindji made a contribution to the program as well.



- **First Aid, CPR AND AED Level C Training** two training sessions took place in the month of February 2024. The first session took place on February 7 and 8, 2024. Twenty participants were certified. And the second session took place on February 24 and 25, 2024 twelve in total were certified.
- **Youth Incentive Program 2023.** The Youth trip for this program was put on hold during the summer of 2023 due to forest fires and smoke. When no trip took place during the summer months and to avoid the students missing instruction time, when school resumed, a decision was made to give the students incentive packages. The Youth Incentive Program was for the 2022-2023 school year. Three students in each class, at the Maquatua Eeyou School, were selected for this incentive for the 2022-2023 school year. A total of thirty-four students were each given \$500 PC gift cards, \$200 coffee shop gift cards and a \$500 cheque. They were also invited to an Indian Taco Supper that took place on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Twenty-eight of the students, along with their family and friends, came to join in for the supper.
- **Youth Winter Camp 2024** was planned to take place March 9-16, 2024. Due to youth not signing up, the camp did not take place.

Also, throughout the year, the Youth Centre held various social nights, movie nights, theme days, mini-tournaments, competitions, contests, and youth consultations.

OTHER EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS

- Skeet shooting competition: April 12, 2023
- Youth Spirit Week: April 24-28, 2023
- Bike marathon-June 10, 2023: a collaboration with the Health and Fitness Department
- Running marathon-July 8, 2023: a collaboration with the Health and Fitness Department
- Pride month activities (Flag Rise and Social Night, Parade): June 2023
- Indoor activities: August, September 2023
- Halloween, various activities: October 2023
- Poppy marking workshop: November 7, 8 and 9, 2023
- Remembrance Day poppy search: November 10, 2023
- Youth Christmas Dinner Grab n' Go and Trivia Live Show: December 15, 2023
- Sewing workshop (Glove/Mittens/Baaluks): January 22 to February 2, 2024
- Slipper-making workshop: March 13-28, 2024

In closing, the Youth Department, would like to thank all Youth Program Financial Funders for their continuous support throughout the years: Apatisiwin Skills Development, Niskamoon Inc, Newmont Eleonore, Tawich Inc, the Cree Nation Government and especially to everyone who assisted, instructed in the programs and operations here at the Youth Centre, and especially to the Youth who all made 2023-2024 a success. Thank you.

C.O.O.L. After School Program

Mary Shashaweskum
Manager



This year has been challenging, with the forest fires and the departure of the previous C.O.O.L. Centre Manager, but we made it to the end of the year. The C.O.O.L centre was closed for a few weeks when the community was in a state of emergency. The previous manager moved to pursue other endeavors, in August 2023, and the staff members were without a manager, for a couple of months.

I started working in November 2023, and the staff were a tremendous help with my orientation. I would like to thank them for their hard work and for their dedication to the children and the C.O.O.L. Centre.

Every summer, C.O.O.L. runs the Traditional/ Science Summer camp, thanks to funding from sponsors in Newmont and Niskamoon. It started July 4, 2024, and was to go until August 4, 2024, but only ran for about two weeks, due to the forest fires and the state of emergency. Staff were reassigned to the registration centre for the Emergency Social Services efforts. A total of 45 children were registered.

The regular C.O.O.L program started on August 15, 2023, and will be ending on August 19, 2024. The younger group (Kindergarten to Grade 1) was full, with 30 children and the older group (Grade 2 to Grade 6) had 17 students registered. The program was successful despite several challenges.

The staff at the C.O.O.L program also have several activities for children from 5 to 12 years old and for the community. The following are some of the activities and events that C.O.O.L. staff organized or participated in:

- Children's Easter Egg Hunt
- Goose Break Items Hunt and Gift Card Giveaways
- Family Scavenger Hunt - Winter Carnival
- Christmas Dinner with Parents and Children
- Children's Outdoor Christmas Tree and Snowman Contest
- Outdoor Street Broomball and Hockey
- CPR/First-Aid Training
- Family Day Movie Night vouchers

This year we are looking forward to finally implementing new programming and services that were set in place in the previous year, due to changes in management, and these include:

- Drop-off services for those on the waiting list, starting August 2024
- Providing a variety of clubs and programming for Grades 4 to 6 in the evening and/or weekends
- Increasing Cree language and culture programming
- Re-starting the Parents Advisory Committee for the new 2024-2025 school year.

Now that the paving of our driveway and the front of the building will be completed this year, we are hoping to secure funds to landscape our outdoor play area and purchase playground equipment soon. We are looking forward to the new fiscal year.



Photo by Katherine Dehm

Sports and Facilities



Diana Shashaweskum
Director

Greetings,

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Cree Nation of Wemindji and its management, for the opportunity to fill in for the role of Interim Director of Sports and Facilities. There have been opportunities for growth, as an individual and as an employee, throughout the years, since I joined the team back in 2006. Thank you for believing in my abilities and for your trust in me. I feel truly honored to be given this chance and I appreciate the faith you have placed in me.

Our department objectives are to provide services, programs and organized events for the members and residents of Wemindji and to maintain a clean and safe environment within our facilities. We also aim to promote a healthy active lifestyle in the various age groups, with a variety of sports, physical activities and programming. We provide opportunities to have fun, to learn new sports and to increase social interaction and relationships among our staff, parents, coaches, participants and all those involved.

Here are some of the following activities the departments hosted throughout this past year:

RECREATION

- Local and Regional Tournaments
- Leisure Activities
- Sports Camps
- Sports Leagues

MINOR SPORTS / SPORTS ACADEMY

- Hockey and Broomball On-ice Practice sessions
- Multi-Sports and Off-ice sessions
- Re-establishing the Minor Sports Association Committee
- Concentration Program (Partnership with Maquatua Eeyou School)
- B.E.A.R. Program
- Local Tournaments
- Leisure Activities
- H.A.T. Federated Tournaments and Regional

FITNESS AND POOL

- Walk and Run Event
- Physical and Weight Loss programs
- Closure of Pool (due to aging filtration system)

FACILITIES

- Swimming Pool Assessments
- Pool-Work plan for new filtration system
- Grand Opening of the New Paint Hills Arena

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Here are some of the following trainings our staff enrolled in and/or completed:

- New Arena: Software Controls
- CMMS (Computerized Maintenance Management System)
- Project Management: Algonquin College Corporate Training (completed in February 2024)
- Administrative Assistants Program
- ORFA Consultation with Terry Piche (Facility Maintenance)

I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to all our department staff, for their dedication and hard work. I truly

appreciate the time and effort you have put into our department, to deliver successful projects. I am looking forward to another successful year, to the introduction of new projects, and to working with others in building relationships through collaborative opportunities. Your leadership is an asset to the team and truly inspirational. Let us always be open to new opportunities and to learning from one another, in moving forward towards more success.

Lastly, thank you to all our volunteers, student athletes, participants, spectators and all those involved. Our success is, in part, because of you. We look forward to your continuous support. Please feel free to communicate your suggestions to our departments.



Sports and Recreation



Brian T. Ottereyes
Coordinator



The Sports and Recreation hosted activities and tournaments throughout the year. Some of these events were successful and others were cancelled due to weather or non-participation. Here is the list of events we hosted, along with some pictures.

- **Brian T. Ottereyes**, *Recreation Coordinator*
- **Deanna Hughboy**, *Recreation Assistant*
- **Roberta Hughboy**, *Contractual (Work Experience Program)*

ANNUAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

- Annual Invitational Senior Basketball Tournament: June 2023 (cancelled)
- Annual Invitational Senior Softball and Fastpitch Tournament: September 2023
- Annual Invitational Senior Volleyball Tournament: October 2023
- Annual Senior Hockey and Broomball Tournament: February 2024
- Annual Senior Broomball Tournament: February 2024
- Annual Senior Challenge Cup: March 2024

LOCAL TOURNAMENTS

- Local Darts Tournament (April 2023)
- Local Cribbage Tournament (April 2023)

- Local Badminton Tournament (May 2023)
- Local 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament (June 2023)
- Local Fastpitch Tournament (August 2023)
- Local Floor Hockey Tournament (August 2023)
- Local Softball Tournament (August 2023)
- Local Coed Broomball Tournament (November 2023)
- Local Senior Hockey Tournament (November 2023)
- Local Senior Broomball Tournament (November 2023)

LOCAL LEAGUES

- Local Softball and Fastpitch League (Participants had a hard time being committed the year before, so we switched it to have more local tournaments.)
- Local Senior Volleyball League (October-November)
- Local Senior Hockey and Broomball League (Got cancelled due to lack of participants)



Christmas Festivities



Senior Fastpitch Tournament



Local Home Run Derby



Darts Tournament 2022 (April)
Winners

LOCAL PROGRAMS/EVENTS

- Winter Carnival (April 2023)
- Skeet Shooting Contest (April)
- Coffee Break (June, July, August, December and January)
- Softball Game and BBQ (June)
- Summer Games (July)
- Wemindji Birthday (July 15)
- Trout Derby (July and August)
- Walleye Derby (August)

- Halloween Events (October)
- Christmas and New Year's Events (December)

In addition, we would like to thank the people that have been participating in our events and activities for making our events and activities successful. Also, a big thank you to our contractors, casual workers and work experience for the extra hands. Without them we couldn't have done it. Once again, thank you Serenity Hughboy, Cassie Hughboy, Roberta Hughboy and Curtis Wadden.

Arena, Complex and Outdoor Courts



Brian T. Ottereyes
Interim Manager

Wachiya,

I was hired as the Interim Manager of Recreation Facilities on February 6, 2024. I'm looking forward to working with my new staff and in my position, as we set for goals and trainings together. With the new arena opening (Paint Hills Arena), we have already made history and hosted five tournaments, from January to March 2024. It was a learning experience for everyone that participated, from players to fans to workers. The excitement for this year will be very interesting with new renovations for our buildings to come, in 2024-2025.

OUR SPORTS AND FACILITIES TEAM

- **Daniel Asquabaneskum**, *Arena Maintenance (Interim Supervisor)*
- **Brandon Kakabat**, *Arena Maintenance*
- **Dean Shanush**, *Arena Maintenance*
- **Robert Sam (Arena)**, *Ice Resurfacers (Contract)*
- **Julian Mark (Arena)**, *Arena Maintenance (Contract)*
- **Gerald Shashaweskum**, *Arena Janitor*
- **Brendan Shashaweskum**, *Arena Janitor*
- **William Stewart**, *Complex Supervisor Maintenance*
- **Warren Mistacheesick**, *Complex Maintenance*
- **Charlene S. Mayappo**, *Complex Janitor*
- **Priscilla Mayappo**, *Complex Janitor*
- **Charlene Miniquaken**, *Administrative Assistant*

LISTED ARE SOME OF THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES HELD IN OUR SPORTING FACILITIES

- Senior Local/Invitational Tournaments
- Senior Local Leagues
- Minor Local Tournaments
- Minor and Senior Practices (Gym, Arena, Ballfield)
- Cree Nation of Wemindji Staff - BBQ and Softball Game
- Community Activities and Events
- Cree Nation of Wemindji: Local Annual General Assembly
- Private Group Activities and Events
- Christmas Staff Party

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Our Sports Facilities Maintenance Staff and Supervisors

- Ice Making and Painting, with ORFA (Ontario Recreation Facilities Association) Sept/Oct 2024
- Project Management - Algonquin College Corporate Training (continuing to Winter 2024)
- Internal and CMMS Software - Laval QC (March 2024)

We are looking forward to giving the staff more training opportunities, as needs are identified in specific areas.



Basketball Court

OUR FACILITIES

MAWABOU GARDENS ARENA

The old arena was shut down in April 2023 and was never started up again.

The staff cleaned up and moved to the new arena in the summer of 2023.

NEW ARENA

The grand opening of the new arena was on September 28, 2023.

We had five tournaments at the new arena from February to March 2024, including minors and seniors with hockey and broomball categories.

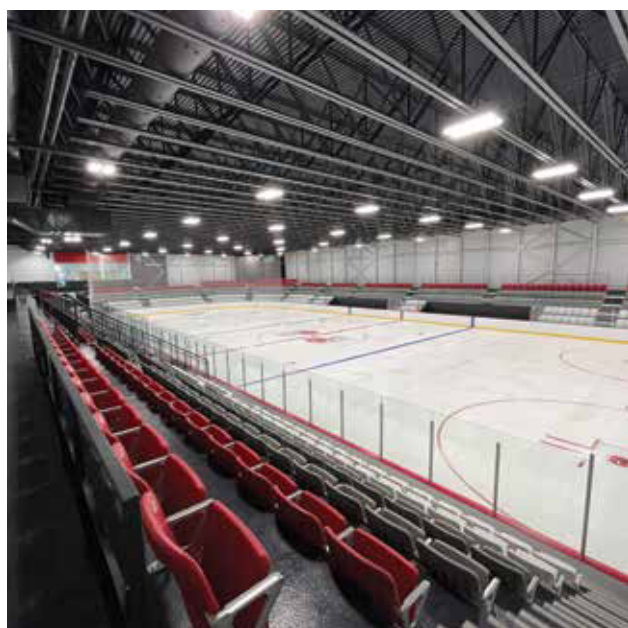
SPORTS COMPLEX

Our maintenance staff operation varies throughout the year, depending on the workload and the events hosted in the facility.

The swimming pool operations are still closed until further notice and until we get a new system installed.

Our fitness rooms and gymnasium operated all year-round, with the program services provided by our Minor Sports, Recreation and Fitness Departments. During the school year, Minor Sports and Sports Academy started their off-ice and multi-sport programs from September to June.

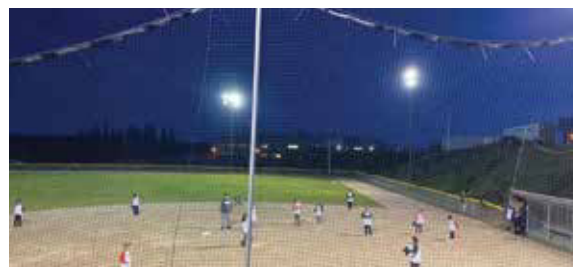
The facility is made available for other departments/organization to host small or large activities and/or events. Our staff prepares the needs that are required.



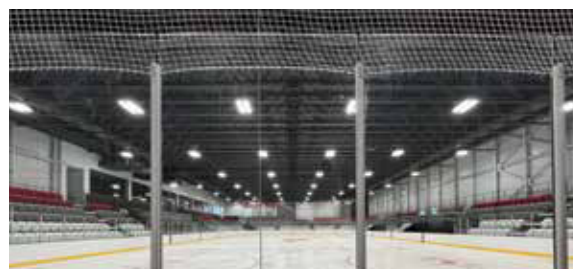
Rink (View from eastside)



Ballfield



Ballfield



Rink (View from behind the net)



The Sports Academy Hockey/Broomball and Multi Sports 2023-2024 Program involved getting children and youth to excel in sports activities, such as hockey, broomball and multi sports. Other activities included a snack program, and a school concentration program, where the student athletes attended sessions in the gymnasium and fitness centre for physical training, during school hours. The Program is geared toward providing physical activities and promoting a healthy lifestyle to our student athletes, as well as ensuring that they are having fun during their participation.

CONTRACTUAL STAFF

- **Nathaniel Vaillancourt**, *Sports Academy Coordinator*
- **Delilah Stephen**, *Broomball Instructor*
- **Larissa Georgekish**, *Broomball Instructor*
- **Bailey Hughboy**, *Hockey Instructor*
- **Kris Kakabat**, *Multi Sports Instructor*
- **Evan Kakabat**, *Multi Sports Instructor*
- **Jacob Georgekish**, *Floater Instructor*
- **Craig Visitor**, *Hockey and Broomball Instructor*

INSTRUCTOR - REPLACEMENTS

- **Keisha MacDonald**
- **Ashlee MacDonald**
- **Justin MacDonald**
- **Felix Stephen**
- **Katie Mistacheesick**
- **Elsa Stewart**

Our challenges during the 2023-2024 Season included participation in the multi-sports sessions. It was also challenging, during our on-ice sessions for both hockey and broomball, when student athletes showed up late for their practice slots. There were a few sessions when we only had 1 or 2 participants.

To summarize what this hockey/broomball season successfully accomplished: A few categories won hockey and broomball tournaments throughout the 2023-2024 season. Of course, it's not all about winning. The focus has always been to help our student athletes excel, learn other sports, as well as to teach them discipline on and off the ice.



Arena Staff

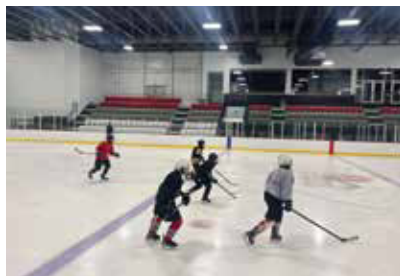
Teaching our student athletes discipline builds great character which they can demonstrate in school and in their relationships with their teachers and with Cree School Board staff members. They also learn to respect one another, by practicing that we should treat each other the same way we want to be treated.

There will always be a bit of both good and bad in this program but there's also a whole lot of potential. I really hope more discussions will be had about this program and I hope that we can learn what current and future student athletes might thrive on. I strongly believe the Sports Academy can expand the activities in this community.

Furthermore, throughout this hockey season, during past ones and over the summer, I've witnessed and appreciated just how much several of our student athletes have improved, in their behavior, both on and off the ice and in their respect for one another and towards Sports Academy instructors.

We would like to thank the coaching staff, managers and volunteers for their help with the 2023-2024 hockey/broomball season.

SA Hockey 2024



Fitness Centre



Gregory Louttit
Coordinator (interim)



Wachyia,

My name is Gregory Louttit, I am the new (interim) Fitness Coordinator, replacing Narasha Stewart who is currently on leave. Our department goal for the members and residents of Wemindji is simple: to provide tools for all ages and physical levels through effective and simple workout programs.

Throughout the year, our team has been providing services and challenges to the community in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

Our team would like to thank everyone that participated in the events and challenges we've provided. We had fun organizing and conducting these events.

I would like to thank our team for doing an excellent job at making these events possible. Your dedication and perseverance doing an excellent job goes beyond fitness. Working for the emergency team during the forest fires shows that you can guys can work with any team. You are awesome!!

FITNESS STAFF

- **Gregory Louttit**, *Fitness Programs Coordinator (interim)*
- **Lindy Georgekish**, *Fitness Attendant*
- **Carey Atsynia**, *Fitness Attendant*

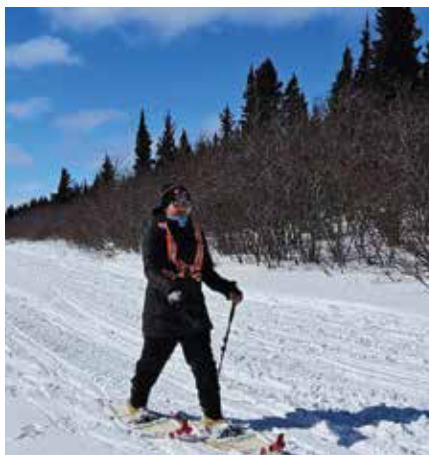
- **Gregory Louttit**, *Fitness Attendant (replacement)*
- **Marshall Stewart**, *Fitness Attendant*
- **Vanessa Gilpin**, *Complex Attendant*
- **Zachary Shashaweskum**, *Complex Attendant (replacement)*
- **Gregory Louttit**, *Complex Attendant*

FITNESS ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- **Open Class-Train with John Wagner:** April 17 and 20, 2023
- **Personal Training:** April 28, 2023
- **Open House Fitness Centre:** June 8, 2023
- **Bike Marathon:** June 10, 2023
- **Canoe Race:** June 21, 2023
- **Running Marathon:** July 8, 2023
- **Health and Fitness Photo a Day:** August 1-14, 2023
- **After School Workouts:** Sept 5-December 15, 2023
- **Free Morning Sessions:** Sept 5-29, 2023
- **Lunch-Fit with Gregory:** January 30-March 15, 2024
- **Snowshoe Race:** March 30, 2024

Fitness Centre Monthly Total Attendance 2023-2024

April	393
May	489
June	604
July	206
August	497
September	421
October	325
November	486
December	286
January	406
February	419
March	439
Total	4971



Minor Sports



Shawna MacDonald
Coordinator



Cassie Hughboy, *Assistant* (replacement)

Curtis Wadden, *Assistant* (replacement)

Roberta Hughboy, *Contractual*
(Work Experience Program)

Conway Georgekish, *Contractual*
(Work Experience Program)

Here is a list of activities and events/programs from 2023-2024 season.

- Goose Break Activities
- Halloween Festivities
- New Years Extravaganza and Christmas Festivities
- Local Minor Tournaments (Basketball, Softball, Volleyball, Broomball and Hockey)
- Local Minor Homerun Derby
- Minor, Juniors and Class "C" Tournament (Part 1 and 2)
- James Bay Minor Broomball League Championships (hosted by Wemindji)

- Broomball and Hockey Camp
- Wemindji's Birthday Activities
- Coaching and Referee Clinics
- 4-Week Multi Sports Summer Camp
- Sports Academy Program
- Sports Academy with Maquatua Eeyou School
- Minor Sports Association Committee (nominations and elections)
- First Aid Training
- Twist Training for Sports Academy Staff
- ASIST Training for Sports Academy Staff

We would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time, whether it is on the coaching staff bench, or driving players to practice or out-of-town events, Thank you all for your continuous support. We are open to new ideas, so if you have anything you would like to share with us, we would greatly appreciate it.



Local Minor Softball



Minor Hockey Tournament



Minor Sports



Local Broomball Tournament



Local Broomball Tournament



Local Minor Softball

If you have a project in mind
and would like to submit it or
put a proposal together, do
not hesitate to stop by my
office at:



NISKAMOON OFFICE

75 Beaver Road Weminjdi, QC

Geraldine Mark, Local Niskamoon Officer

Tel: 819-978-3005

E-mail: markgeraldine@niskamoon.org



MISSION

The Cree Nation of Wemindji is committed to offering quality services to all community members honouring our Cree values and traditions and in line with the funds that are entrusted to us. We are the stewards of the Wemindji traditional territory. We ensure the preservation of our language and culture and create opportunities to connect with the land through programs and activities.

www.wemindji.ca

