



ANNUAL
REPORT
2022-2023

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Message from the Chief

Christina Gilpin

Wachiyak Wemindji Eeyouch!

We are on the second year of the current Council term. It has been a constructive year. We have worked on new laws: the Human Resources Committee Law for the purpose of evaluating our Executive Officers, and we have also had readings at the Council level for the Elders Council Law, Chishaayiyiu wiishuwaawin. This last one will be enacted this summer and hopefully, we will be ready to have elections this coming fall, so that we can finally have an official Elders Council. We value the knowledge that our Elders have, and we want our approach to facilitate the Elders' participation in the community's development and prosperity. The law contains a specific clause demanding that the Elders must work with the Youth, which is intended to create a fundamental working relationship to maintain our values, culture, and language.

We recognize the work required for the review and amendment of outdated laws into ones that reflect our current reality. This is an endless task that will continue to exist in all the upcoming terms of Council. We will prioritize which laws to review for the next 2 years.

The amendment of the Election Law is an unresolved matter. It has gone through two referendums in the past 2 years and has not passed, due to not attaining the quorum of 20 percent of all electors. This requirement is very specific to the Election Law. Other referendums require at least 10 percent of all electors. As Chief and Council, we are not allowed to make any public comments on it, because it concerns our own elections.

The Council has sessions on a regular basis with the Youth Council & Department, Elders Advisory Group, Miyupimaatsiun Committee, and Tawich Holdings Corporation. We also recently met with the school administration to address the state of education in our community. There is concern about absenteeism among our students. Education is essential to individual growth and success, and in the long run, to a progressive society. I would like to take this time to encourage parents to send their children to school ready to learn, which includes making sure that they are well-rested and well-fed. This responsibility lies with parents and guardians.

Another alarming matter in our community is the progressive loss of our Cree language, eeyou ayimuun. This is our identity and culture that is at stake. Each one of us chooses to maintain our eeyou ayimuun by actively speaking and listening to our experienced speakers. We must all choose to keep it; this is our legacy to future generations.

I would like to take this opportunity to express that I am very honoured to be working with the current Council: Deputy Chief Arden Visitor for his keen memory and counsel, Ernest Tomatuk for his ample traditional knowledge and his determination on speaking Cree at meetings, George Natawapineskum for his knowledge and interest of all things marine and land-based, Rocky Georgekish for his tenacity in seeking knowledge and willingness to represent the Council on various committees, Roslyn Tomatuk for her receptiveness, attention to detail and her knowledge in HR and corporate matters, and Stanley Shashaweskum for his historical knowledge of our community and tremendous passion for sports and leisure.

Two of our Executive officer appointments changed over the course of the year. Katherine Moses is now the Director General as of July 7, 2022. Her vast knowledge of and experience in the inner workings of our organization and her association with various regional entities provides us with so much value. Shalane Tomatuk is now the Treasurer as of September 6, 2022; her bold choice to accept the work to manage the finances of CNW and the finance team is to be admired. They are both high-level performers to our organization and we are fortunate to have them. The other Executive officer is Corporate Secretary Karen Mistacheesick, who keeps us in line with our work as a Council and is doing a great job managing our records. The Interim Executive Secretary Josephine Natawapineskum takes care of us and makes our work lives so much easier.

Thank you to the management team of Directors and all the employees of CNW. You are what makes this organization a success. Thank you to our constituents, Wemindji Eeyouch, for your valued participation and making our community a great place to live. We will always seek your honest feedback so that we can improve our organization.



Message from Deputy Chief

Arden Visitor

Waachiyaah and greetings to our members,

Serving as Deputy Chief for the Cree Nation of Wemindji (CNW) and representing our community at various events has always been an honour and privilege. I want to thank all my fellow council members for their assistance and ongoing support throughout the year.

I want to acknowledge the work of our Director General, Treasurer, and Corporate Secretary this past year. Their dedication and leadership has had a profound effect on our daily operations.

Likewise, I want to recognize and thank the staff at CNW for their hard work, perseverance, and loyalty; these are the people who make things happen for our community and its members.

Furthermore, I would like to thank our local organizations: the Cree Health Board and Cree School Board for collaborating with the CNW departments on various projects, programs and initiatives that benefit our community. Let's keep working together to make Wemindji a better and safer place for our children and

elders. I want to encourage community members to participate and get involved at community gatherings and events, as this is an opportunity to enrich our lives, familiarize ourselves with our community plans and connect with our community leaders.

As a team, let us move forward with determination and confidence to achieve more for our people and foster the growth of healthy, educated youth and members who will lead us and run our local affairs. We live in a community with endless opportunities to thrive and lead healthy lives. I encourage everyone to adopt a healthy lifestyle and be a contributing member. We have a vibrant history and a form a thriving community with a bright future.

In closing, let us remember where we came from and our forebears' sacrifices to get where we are in modern-day Wemindji. Let's hold on to our rich culture, beautiful Cree language, Eeyou values and lands that have nurtured and sustained our ancestors for many generations.

"Wemindji is another word for opportunity."





Message from Director General

Katherine Moses

The 2022-2023 fiscal year has been a year of transition for me, as I moved from the Finance department to the full-time position of Director General. I took on the role effective July 7, 2022, after 21 years of work as Treasurer.

Last summer, we reviewed the Cree Nation of Wemindji's (CNW) draft strategic plan, which was initiated by the previous Director General, and continued the work with all our directors. We linked our plans with Wemindji's vision statement to ensure that we were in line with what the members have envisioned for our community. We are now in the process of implementing that plan, which we will monitor and report on as time goes by.

To meet the growing needs of the community and our organization, we created 5 new positions, with more to come in the new fiscal year. Our community is growing and there is a need for additional staff to serve our members.

Building skills and capacity is also important for the long-term development of our staff and our community. Our departments have worked on coordinating new training initiatives for both CNW employees and our community members: lineman training, accounting courses, first responders training, inventory control and asset management training, entrepreneur training, mental health awareness training.

In terms of capital projects' we have been focusing on the multi-year planning for the construction of new social housing units to address our housing shortage, the expansion of the community infrastructure to accommodate all the upcoming housing units, and new facilities to be constructed in the future, such as

the Cultural Knowledge Center, an Alms house for those experiencing homelessness, and collaborating with Cree Nation Government Justice department on a Tiny Homes project.

The challenges we face and are focused on addressing in the coming years are the lack of qualified Cree personnel for specific trades and areas, communicating with our members, the lack of office space for our staff, aging facilities which need renovations or expansions, and the variety of programs and services available in the community.

The purpose of the CNW is to provide the best possible programs and services to our members and our departments have been working hard to serve our people: our employees are also our community members. Therefore, we will continue to work towards providing the best programs and services to our members, while being mindful of the needs and contributions of both our employees and our community members. We are all responsible for ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect: this is the mission of the Cree Nation of Wemindji.

In closing, let us reiterate our vision for the CNW: *"We are Eeyouch, who are forward thinking and self-determined. We work together to support and empower our people and continuously build capacity for the development of our thriving community for all generations, now and the future."*

Thank you.



Treasurer's Report

Shalane Tomatuk

Wachiyakw misuuwaah!

It is my pleasure to provide my first annual report as Treasurer of the Cree Nation of Wemindji (CNW), on behalf of the Finance Department. The Cree Nation of Wemindji is still in good financial health. We would not accomplish this without the great work of our employees; thank you all!

GENERAL OPERATING FUND (GOF)

In 2022-2023, the Cree Nation of Wemindji received \$11.1 million from the federal government to provide basic services to the community including its administration, governance, maintenance of public buildings, equipment and facilities, public safety and fire department, housing administration, road and walkway maintenance, environment and land management, economic development, and benefits and counselling department. You will find the detailed breakdown of expenses of these departments in Appendix A of the Financial Statements.

We had an accumulated surplus of \$3.1 million at the beginning of the year; we have spent a little over 1 million of this surplus in 2022-2023, which leaves a balance of \$2 million to spend in the next one to two years. You will find the statement of operations and Accumulated Operating Surplus (Deficit) in section I 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 \$67.2 million in revenues (including deferred revenues from previous years) for 2022-2023. 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 the Niskamoon Corporation, the 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.

The financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 will be presented at the Annual General Assembly and I will be available to answer questions you may have.







Human Resources

Brenda Bull, *Director*

I am pleased to present the Human Resources annual report for 2022-2023. The following provides highlights from the past year and focuses on a transitioning of our workplans into the strategic plan.

First off, meet our resource team which consists of:

Human Resources: Deborah Diamond, HR Coordinator who supports the HR functions, file management, assists on recruitment, time management and coordination of staff events.

IT Support: Tassa Danyluk, Information Technology Technician who provides a variety of technical support and coordinates public meetings and services.

Quality Management: Lianna Cheezo-Visitor joined our team as the Quality Coordinator. Lianna brings her knowledge of ISO training, a prime focus on management system activities and acts as a liaison for departmental services.

Office Management: Bertie Jolly, Office Manager oversees administrative frontline services, as well as office management while ensuring safety and security within the Administration office.

Our summer students: Rhianna Swallow, Todd Blackned and Cain Stewart.

Operational new personnel & organizational changes

NEW APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Katherine Moses started her role as Director General in July and **Shalane Tomatuk** was appointed as Treasurer in September. Both hold roles as Executive Officers.

MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEES

Deanna Hughboy, as the *Recreation Assistant*

Miranda Georgekish, as the *Accounting Clerk*

Carla Kakabat, hired into the new *Payroll Assistant position*

Jason Blackned, as *Operator*

Wesley Visitor, as *Light Vehicle Mechanic*

Priscilla Mayappo, as the *Janitor for the Sports Complex*

Gregory Loutit, as *Fitness Centre Attendant*

Brandon Gull, as *Facilitator – Youth Centre*

Eugene Hughboy, as *Waste Management Assistant*

Jimmy Happyjack, as *Janitor – Administration Office*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE NEW POSITIONS

Chelsea Moses-Blackned, as *Capital Works Coordinator*

Elmer Atsynia, as *Garage Manager*

Shirlene Mistacheesick, as *Environment Coordinator*

Gabriel Georgekish, as *Ground Maintenance Worker*

Douglas Hughboy, as *Program Coordinator, Youth Centre*

Tamara Murdoch, as *Heritage Language Coordinator*

Shawna MacDonald, as *Minor Sports Coordinator*

Hannah Georgekish, as *Accountant of the Finance*

Arlene Hughboy, as *Housing Administrator*

Frederick Asquabaneskum, as *Maintenance Worker of Public Buildings and Housing Maintenance*

Mara Mayappo, as *Accountant*

IN MEMORY

Memorial to our colleague Raymond Georgekish who lost his battle to cancer last summer. We keep you in our hearts and send our respect to his family, relatives, friends, and colleagues.

YEARS OF SERVICE

30 Years Norma Shashaweskum

25 Years Cheryl Weaponicappo

25 Years Victor Blackned

25 Years Kevin Kakabat

25 Years Derek Mark

25 Years Gregory Visitor

20 Years Christine Kakabat Atsynia



20 Years Elmer Atsynia

15 Years Diana Shashaweskum

15 Years Mara Mayappo

Retirees: The opportunity to fondly reflect on the past, enjoy the present and embrace the future ahead.

Samuel Hughboy retires with 23 years of service. Sammy started his career as Maintenance Worker. A quiet, but dedicated colleague, he worked many shifts over the 23 years to ensure the arena was not only opened, but well maintained and ready for events and tournaments. The years of experience prepared him to act as Supervisor, which he naturally took on with the annual planning, staff management, and as a leader to ensure everyone's safety. On a special note, he ensured his team were well-trained to follow the seasonal maintenance process, and to care for other sport facilities. I am sure he can share many memorable moments over his 23 years in the Arena. We wish him well and a safe retirement.

Phyliss Tomatuk retires with 15 years of service. Phyliss, as one of our first janitorial employees, has been a high performer, very punctual, and kind to everyone. She worked with a smile that she carried out throughout the years. She maintained the cleanliness of the old offices, the community hall and easily adjusted to new space within the Administration Office. She held an important role and displayed commitment to the organization. Her routine work made it possible for everyone to enter clean facilities; she provided assistance with events as well. We encourage Phyliss to enjoy her retirement, as she expressed the desire to spend more time on the land with family.

Linda Stewart, Wellness and Culture Manager, retires with 20 years of service. Linda came into the role with a strong commitment that proudly showed her love of the community. She was dedicated to deliver quality services and social activities for the clients, along with her department. Throughout the years she represented CNW on multiple committees, while playing an active role to maintain and preserve the Cree culture and language. She enjoyed linking our elders' activities. Her passion to help others paved the way for her department. We wish Linda a wonderful retirement.

Juliet Asquabaneskum, Janitor, retires with 15 years of service. A one-of-a-kind employee, who went above and beyond in the workplace and continued in the community. She often stayed after work shifts to assist in the programming or social activities as a participant, and a few times as the instructor. She demonstrated a committed work ethic and expertise in the culture, especially for cooking and feast coordination, ensuring everyone was fed. We already miss her sense of humor with everyone. Over the years she maintained the cleanliness of the Sports Center and Community Hall and made sure the facilities were clean for clients and the employees.



HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Arlene Hughboy

Angela Stewart

Howard MacDonald

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Human Resources department aims to deliver the best possible services and to provide support. Our purpose is to empower employees to become efficient contributors to the success and growth of CNW.

This year, our team focused on improving internal communications and work processes, and on building on improvements.

Capacity building is a key area our team monitors and training development is a key area to meet our performance results.

Our team partnered with other departments and entities to organize activities to sustain and maintain the Cree language and cultural practices and to promote healthy living.

Capacity Building and training initiatives
Internal Auditor training
Project Management Certification

- Resource, Communication and Stakeholder Management
- Project Time and Cost

Accounting Certification project

- Intermediate Accounting II
- Introduction to Taxation
- Financial Analysis and Planning
- E-Commerce Business

Occupational Health and Safety

- Essentials on workplace

Emergency Preparedness

- Post-pandemic

Microsoft programs

- Word
- Office 365
- Teams
- Access database

Maintenance Lineman on-the-job training and partnering Hydro-Québec

On behalf of the Administration, I would like to take the time to acknowledge our staff for their ongoing commitment to the organization. In addition, to Tassa for co-managing the communications platforms with Bertie and coordinating the annual report activities.

HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF ACTIVITY CALENDAR

External audit – June 6-10, 2022

Community clean up – June 7, 2022

Culture Day with Culture and Wellness and Gookums – June 9, 2022

Employee selfcare “staff appreciation” – June 10, 13 and 15, 2022

Visit with Hydro-Québec – June 2022

Stay active walks – Summer 2022

General Staff meeting – August 10, 2022

Staff BBQ “Directors steak out” – August 10, 2022

Annual General Meeting – August 23, 24 and 25, 2022

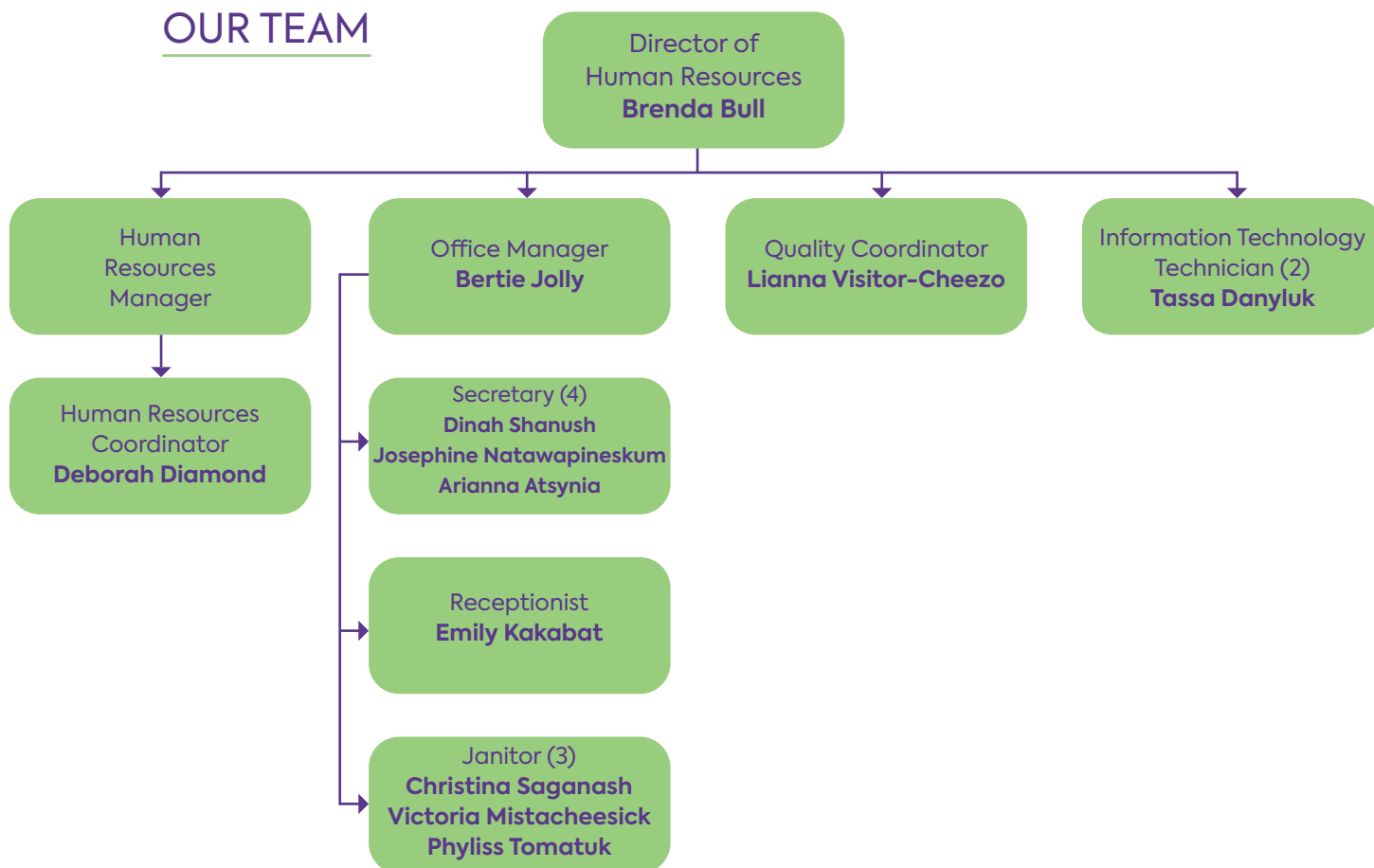
Staff activity “Healthy eating 101” – September 1, 2022

CNW session with members – November 2022

Occupational Health and Safety training – December 1 and 2, 2022

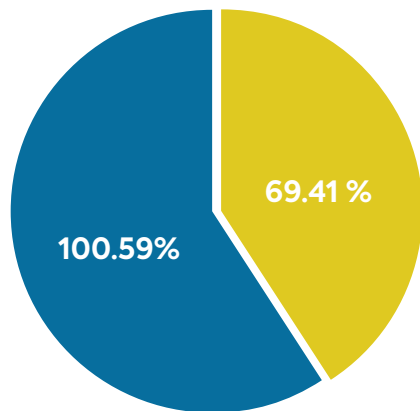
Christmas banquet – December 16, 2022

OUR TEAM



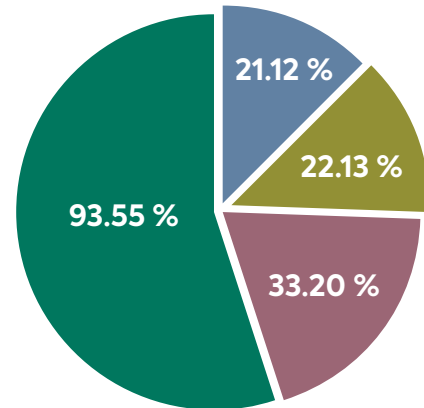
STATISTICS

EMPLOYEES



169 total
regular and seasonal contractual

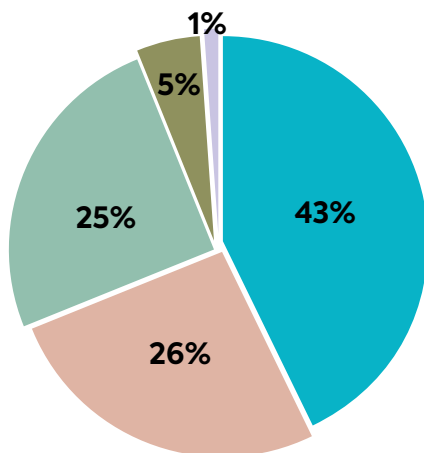
Male Female



Support Professional
Managerial Other

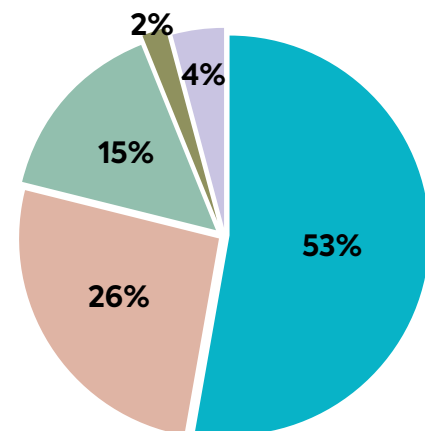
CUSTOMER SERVICE RESULTS

2022-2023



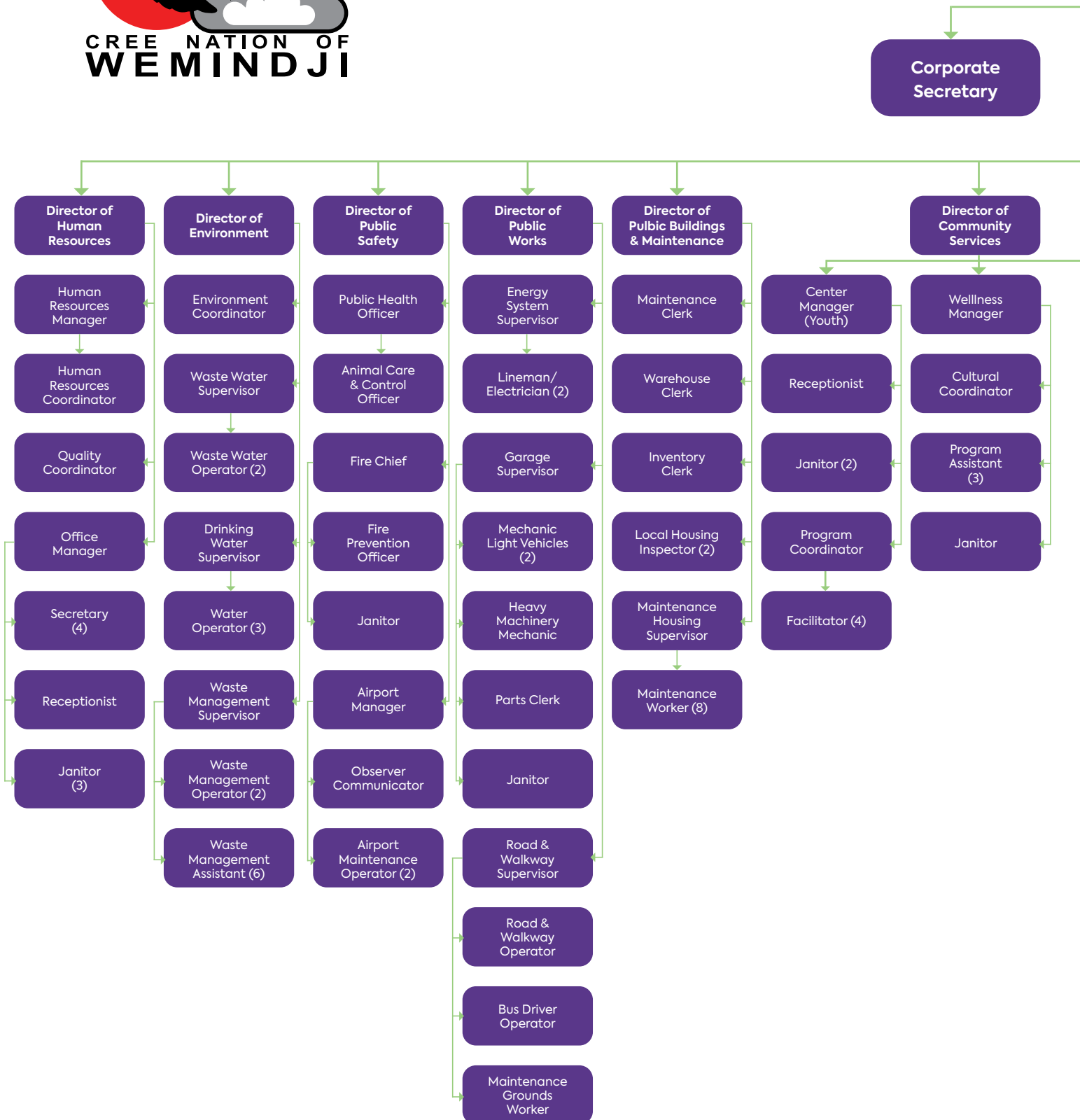
Excellent Good Average
Bad Very Bad

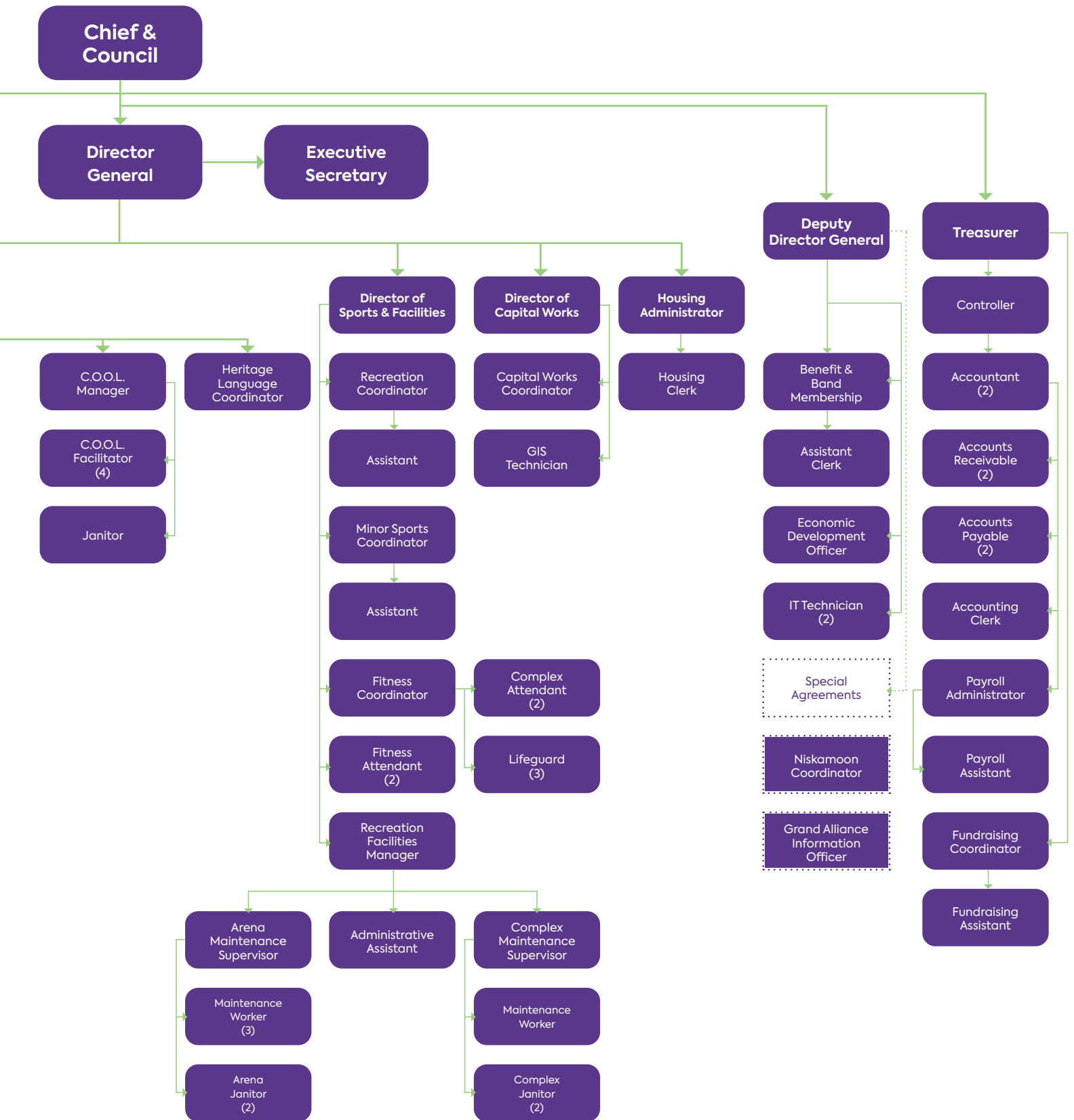
Overall Services Survey results from the overall services surveys compiled at the Annual General Assembly and Environment Health with 6% negative, 69% Positive and 25% Average



Excellent Good Average
Bad Very Bad

Customer satisfaction survey results by department services: Administration, Community Services, Environment, Public Building and Housing Maintenance, Public works, Sports and Facilities, and Public Safety. Overall customer satisfaction 169 surveys resulted 6% negative, 79% Positive and 15% Average.





Updated:
March 14, 2023



Environment and Lands Management

Howard Macdonald, *Director*

Returning to our workplace post-Covid took some time to get used to. It changed the perception of communication within the departments. In fact, this “new normal” has helped our planet, as we reduce our carbon footprint by working electronically and virtually. We cannot be afraid to move forward to become environmentally better for the future generations on this planet, Eeyou Istchee and our beautiful community of Wemindji.

The department has been busy working on key goals. An Environment Response Plan has been in the works, jointly with Public Safety. Staff have attended; Emergency Response training; Contaminated Sites, Spills and Acts; and Risk Management and Emergency Planning. These training sessions are key to help develop and deliver a plan that can be included into Wemindji’s Emergency Response Plan. It is essential to monitor our land, water, and air. Implementing a monitoring program will ensure the needs are met for the health and safety of our people. Approved funding from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund has made a greenhouse in the community a reality. The Growing Dome began in September 2022. Our two Greenhouse technicians, Mackenzie Bull and Lindsey Kitchicappo, have been trained by the greenhouse supplier, Green Iglu.

I would like to welcome our new Environment Coordinator, Shirlene Mistacheesick. With only a couple of months in her new position, familiarizing herself with her roles and responsibilities, she has already taken the lead role of the greenhouse project.

As part of an ongoing relationship with the Capital Works Department and to provide the best quality for Wemindji, the department projects were carefully re-evaluated and after the effects of Covid. Ongoing projects include the new landfill, the closure of the existing landfill, the composting platform, the new wastewater lagoon and water plant upgrades and study. Rest assured, along with many local projects, they are considered priority.

Operations and maintenance of the soil treatment platform falls under the Environment department. This platform was designed to treat the contaminated soil within our community. MTL and Riverside contamination sites will be remediated. The material after treatment can be reused under certain criteria.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A new front load garbage truck was in the process of being purchased (with ISC approving 80% of the costs). It was finally delivered in June 2023. The eco-center site was improved for the community, separating the recycling bins to minimize waste and recycle mix-up. The hazardous material site has been improved for the environment and human health and safety. Relocating the office trailer was not an easy task, but finally it was connected to access water and wastewater services; this was done in-house.



WASTEWATER

The certificates of final acceptance for the sewer upgrades were submitted by Bruser Engineering. The sewer upgrades were done to accommodate the flows and future development by upgrading equipment. The delivery of a new vacuum combination truck was received after months of communicating and finalizing the purchase. During this time, the department contracted AmNor Industries to complete the wastewater flushing as required. The Cree Nation Government provided Cégep training – OW-2 certification program for four participants from the department. The participants then completed the course at the Cégep de Shawinigan.

DRINKING WATER

The water treatment plant has been in operation since 2012. Some equipment may have become obsolete and like any software, programs need to be updated with latest versions. The water plant study will help determine what is required by today's standards, as well as the upgrade on the software programs. Each department has continued with the preventative maintenance plans, despite the delays in correcting deficiencies. The Regional sampling program for both water and wastewater are closely monitored and presented to the DGs on a quarterly basis by a grading system on specific initiatives. I am glad to say a passing grade has been achieved, but like any other sector, improvements can be made.

COMMITTEES

Opinagow Environment Committee members are from CNW, VC29 Representative, Cree Nation Government and Newmont Eleonore. Information is shared on environment topics as well as Social Impact Assessments in Wemindji, and the Cree Land Use Monitoring Program,

while striving to meet key performance indicators – with commitment, collaboration, communication, and capacity building.

The Climate Change Advisory Committee and the LEA Committee involve members from each Cree community with representatives from the environment departments and is chaired by the CNG environment department. Obviously, environment concerns, ideas, topics are among the discussions at a regional and local levels.

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee, appointed in June 2022, is the first for the CNW and is creating and implementing inspections and reports guided by the OHS Policy. Efforts are made to ensure health and safety in the workplace.

For just a little over a year and a half, I have enjoyed working in the Environment sector, learning new skills, understanding the roles and responsibilities within the department, as well as recollecting commitments in the 5-year Environment Master Plan (2021 – 2025). Finally, thank you to ALL Environment Department Staff for your hard work and dedication, as you provide an excellent service to your community.





Capital Works

Gilbert Georgekish, *Director*

The Capital Projects team is pleased to provide this update covering our progress on the projects we have been working on for this past year and our plans for the near future. One of our department's objectives is Quality, in terms of meeting requirements/specifications in the value provided to the community, within the time specified, for the price paid.

The Capital Works Department is responsible for the management, administration, and updating of the New Relationship Agreement (NRA) five-year capital plan. Specific technical documents are required to report to the Cree Nation Government on the use of allocated funds.

The following types of documents are included on reporting requirements:

- Cree Nation Government Funding Agreement
- Descriptive project sheet
- Proposal/offer of services from professionals, and bid analysis
- Detailed cost estimates (Class D, C, B, and A levels)
- Feasibility reports / supporting studies
- Environmental impact assessment and approval
- Plans and specifications for Tender and / or for Construction

- As-built plans and specifications
- End-of-year progress report (if project extends over one year)
- Certificate of substantial completion / provisional acceptance
- Certificate of final completion / final acceptance
- Pictures

It is critical for the Cree Nation of Wemindji to gather the above-mentioned documentation in the next couple of years in order help the Cree Nation Government renewal negotiations.

Major initiatives were undertaken by the Capital Works department team during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Several of these priority infrastructure projects are planned to be completed this year. These works include:

- New arena project
- Paving of 52 lots project: Mayaupiu Street, Hillside Street, Mihiikin Street, Pine Street, and Tawich Road
- Curves and sidewalks
- Residential development: Charlie, Bravo, Paint Hills and Social Housing geotechnical studies
- Pavement catch-up program (Phase 2)
- New landfill - 80% complete

We are also planning for projects that will be implemented in the coming years, including many priority infrastructure and building projects. These will provide critical services to the community and include:

- Paving driveways on Mayaupiu & Hillside Streets
- Parks and playgrounds planning study
- Landscaping and beautification planning study
- Maquatua riverbank erosion assessment (Phases 1 and 2)
- Pipe sizing analysis, update of infrastructure master plan, hydraulic balancing study and design standards for infrastructure
- Full cadastral survey of community
- Urban planning circulation and land use studies
- Residential development: Charlie, Paint Hills Street to Hillside Street (13 lots)
- Sludge removal
- Environmental clean-up of MTL tanks and pipeline
- Street lighting on Nipihtaakaapuu
- New wastewater lagoons (relocation)
- Emergency generator at community hall
- Contingency works needed to complete the Mayaupiu and Hillside Development (drainage, backfill, and landscaping)
- 2023 Aggregates
- Landfill closure (leachate mitigation)
- Update of community master plan
- Drinking water plant study: filtration system and intake
- Universal access to community centre building

I would like to express my appreciation to all individuals involved in all the projects for their hard work, dedication, and collaboration. Without their contributions, the successful completion of these endeavors would not have been possible.

Thank you for your attention to this report, and I trust that it will serve as a valuable resource for future decision-making and planning.



Housing Administrator

The housing department has undergone some personnel changes over the past year. Robyn Tomatuk, Housing Administrator, has been on an Education Leave from September 2022, which will end in September of 2024. We wish her great success in her academic endeavours.

Arlene Hughboy replaced Robyn on an interim basis for a few months before taking on a new full-time role as the Human Resources Manager. On behalf of the Cree Nation of Wemindji and the Rental Housing Committee, I want to thank Arlene for her kind assistance and valuable contributions in the department. We wish you all the best in your new role.

We have been experiencing a housing shortage for several years now. The housing department has faced many challenges constructing new units. Covid restrictions, funding limits and drastically rising construction costs have limited our ability to construct new lodgings.

In 2022-2023, we were only able to construct 6 new units (3 duplex units) on Niipihtaakaapuu Street. Things are however looking brighter for the future, as we are currently constructing an 8-plex bachelor unit, two 6-plex units, a 4-plex unit, a duplex along Spruce Street, and one single family home on Visitor Drive, for a total of 27 new units.

As of March 31, 2023, there were 120 applicants on the housing request list, of which 8 are requesting a unit other than the one they are currently living in.

Five vacant units are currently being used as transit units for our renovation projects. 20 units were to be renovated over the past 2 years, but the project moved slowly, as people do not move out of their units fast enough to keep up with the demand for renovations.

With the new housing funding rules, we must have a rental scale policy that requires a minimum rent charge of 15% of household income. Tenants have

been informed of the new rent scale. The rent payments cover annual insurance costs, housing loans, maintenance and repairs, housing administration costs and other maintenance costs related to vehicles (gas, oil, insurance, registration), along with materials and supplies for repairs.

Tenants also have a responsibility to keep their unit in a clean and livable condition. Please report any water leaks or malfunctioning air exchangers, washroom fans, or range hoods. Regular cleaning and decluttering of basements can also go a long way to preventing mould and wear and tear on a unit. A clean house is a happy house!





Public Safety

Victor Blackned, *Director*
Arita Mark, *Interim Director*

Wachiya Wemindji Eeyouch! This is the annual report from Cree Nation of Wemindji (CNW) – Public Safety Department (PSD) for the fiscal year starting April 2022 and ending March 2023. In the last two years, Public Safety was one of the lead departments in the fight against Covid-19, which took up most of our time. This year we will refocus our attention to achieving last year's goals and objectives. The main objectives that were sidetracked by the global pandemic are listed below.

The main points of focus of Public Safety for the past fiscal year were: Rescue Boat, First Responders Coordinator, First Responders Training for new recruits, First Responders – Mental Health Training, Firesmart, and the creation of an Administrative Assistant position for Public Safety.

In June of 2022, all measures relating to Covid-19 were lifted, including the dismantling of the check point at km 4 as well as rapid testing. Our goals and objectives progressed:

- First Responders training was completed in September 2022, with 8 new recruits completing the certification. A First Responders Coordinator was also contracted from September 2022 to March 2023.

- The Rescue Boat's fabrication was delayed due to importation issues with some of the equipment for the boat. In November, CNW-PSD and the Fire Department held a joint exercise with Transport Canada and the Cree Health Board for mass casualty scenario.

The following two items were added to the PSD Goals and Objectives during the fall of 2022:

- Neighbourhood Watch program
- Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Ice Monitoring project

Victor Blackned had to take a leave of absence from his position in December 2022 to the end of the fiscal year for medical reasons. In January 2023, Arita Mark was appointed Interim Director of Public Safety until July 2023.





Public Buildings and Maintenance

Philip Mistacheesick, *Director*

I am honored and pleased to once again submit my annual report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year for the Cree Nation of Wemindji Public Buildings & Maintenance department. I just recently came back from my 3-week goose break, and I can say that I feel rejuvenated. I loved the time I had with my family at our cabin and spring camp.

The year went by so fast! We were very busy planning, preparing, and then executing the work requests from our clients. Our yearly average is about 500 to 600 work order requests, for around 330 units we service.

We purchased the new software for the Computerized Maintenance Management System in the spring of 2022. AMMCO, a company based in Montreal and working alongside with Waptum, the maintenance department, and all building managers assisted in entering and compiling all the data into the software starting in the fall of 2023. Training on how the software operates will commence in 2024 as planning needs to take place.

On September 1, 2022, I issued a statement to my staff, the CNW organization and the public that all CNW warehouses and workshops are required to follow OSHA safety standards, meaning we are required to wear hard hats, uniforms and steel-toed boots when on these premises. This applies to everyone as well.

Verbal requests in public places during non-work hours is a big red flag within our department. It poses as a risk to the maintenance services we provide for the community. It has led to maintenance requests that were not recorded in our work order process and tracking. I invite you all to come by the Maintenance office, located on the administration building's ground floor southwest of the building, during working hours (Monday to Friday 9 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm). You can also reach us by calling 819-978-0264 extension 2229, or you can email your requests to maintenanceclerk@wemindji.ca. Make sure to provide us your name, home address and work description. If you can provide pictures as well, that's great. I also wanted to mention the on-call maintenance phone number: 819-978-7265; we only take emergency calls afterhours.

PROJECTS COMPLETED 2022-2023

- Annual fire inspections (CHUBB Fire and Security)
- Compliance with OSHA safety standards
- Garage doors repair and maintenance
- Purchase of 2 new work trucks
- Oil furnace tank recycling (AIM)
- Heating and ventilation repairs - Administration building
- Attended training in Dorval, Québec - Preventive Maintenance of Facilities
- Attended training in Wendake, Québec - Oil Spills and Decontamination
- Cleaning and organizing the CNW warehouses
- Purchase of the CMMS software (Interval)
- Creation of Inventory Clerk position

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Asset tagging
- Cleanup and closure of the furnace tank disposal site
- Furnace tank disposal procedure
- Housing renovation plan
- Housing maintenance workshop - 2023
- Reroofing project for 29 housing units
- Radon public building
- Oil furnace conversion
- Youth Center 2nd floor balcony
- 2 new ½ doors for the COOL building
- Concrete repairs on the Administration building
- Training on the CMMS Software
- New sign for the Administration building

- Electrical inspection in public buildings
- Housing maintenance workshops – Summer 2023
- Exterior finishing on housing
- Youth center radiant heated floor system repairs upgrades
- Community Hall auditorium flooring

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 UNIT BY SEASONS

Spring

- Be sure to have your belongings stored away from your house in case if the spring thaw causes your basement to flood.
- The water line valve, electrical panel, and sump pit should always be always accessible in case of emergency.

Summer

- Clean your air exchanger every six months with warm water and dry thoroughly before installing the core. Also, vacuum the exhaust and intake which are located at the exterior of your house. Verify that the motor is running smoothly; if not, unplug the air exchanger and call the maintenance clerk to have it serviced. Avoid parking your ATV, snowmobile, or putting any gas containers in front of the air exchanger intake, as it can circulate the carbon monoxide or gases fumes in your home.
- Clean and vacuum the excess lint that accumulates in your dryer and dryer vent to prevent fire, as dryer lint is extremely flammable.
- Install your air conditioner correctly by following the manufacturer's recommendations. The air conditioner produces water condensation, which can cause water damage in your home if not properly installed.

Fall

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

Winter

- 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 to expand, causing damage to your hose and 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 oC and 25 oC, depending on what you feel comfortable.

Electrical

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

Homeowner Maintenance Advice

- If your hot water tank is more than 10 years old, it is time to replace it with a new tank.
- If the colour of the treated wood on your balcony is starting to fade, it is 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 aware of the main water line valve's location in case of busted pipes or leaks.
- If replacing a door, make sure to measure the old door before buying a new door.
- Avoid pouring grease down the drain: 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.





Public Works

Wayne Morrison, *Director*

I am grateful to be given the opportunity to fill the position of the Director of Public Works and to present the 2022-2023 Annual Report on behalf of the Directors: Howard Macdonald, Brenda Bull, and Gilbert Georgekish, who have been co-managing these departments for the last year or so.

One of my major tasks for the near future and year to come will be to help develop the different departments' Strategic Plans. The different departments that make up Public Works certainly have "Good" things happening, but there are also a few "Bad" and "Ugly" things happening. I am not Clint Eastwood, who can just pull a trigger and get rid of these things, but I will certainly try and aim to target and mend the bad and ugly things that need attention.

Under the Public Works Department, we have:

1. ENERGY SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

I want to thank the Human Resources department for getting the ball rolling with their great efforts to try to work with Hydro-Québec, and get our regular employees trained, as well as some other interested trainees. Unfortunately, one of the ugly things is that Hydro-Québec is taking a while to have the Linemen training program accepted, the contract drafted, approved, and signed at their higher levels. Hydro-Québec wanted us to wait and buy their gear and safety equipment from them, but we had been waiting 6 months, so we went ahead to start purchasing our own. There is no supervisor in this department yet, so I am trying to fill in and work closely with our regular employees, Gordon Visitor and Kevin Kakabat, to see what they need and assist where possible. This is probably one of the most or even the most dangerous employment positions working for the Cree Nation of Wemindji, so providing proper training and safety gear

is crucial. My son-in-law just finished his four and a half years' on-the-job lineman training program in Ontario, so we have a long road ahead.

Due to delays and changes of schedule, the joint meeting between CNW and Hydro-Québec was postponed a few times.

However, in the fall of 2022, the Maintenance Lineman training project began, and we had eight interested individuals sign up for the training, along with our departmental staff Kevin and Gordon.

The goal is to have them trained with a certified trainer, at the Hydro-Québec training facility.

Once it starts, this on-the-job training will also include working on the Wemindji electrical infrastructure and community projects where the maintenance lineman will train in the field while the community grows and expands in the future.

Although they may look like they are in a chain gang or escaped from prison, because of their new orange safety clothing, the gentlemen below are Linemen trainees:

- Robert Miniquaken
- Jarred Mark
- Linden Namagoose
- Brandon Mistacheesick
- Xavier Georgekish
- Aaron Visitor

It is great to see the different departments and employees wearing their safety clothing while working on site throughout all departments.

Other interested employees who signed up to take the Lineman training are:

Warren Mistacheesick

Brian Mistacheesick

Fred Asquabaneskum

A part of the mandate of the Energy Systems department is to respond to work order requests such as:

- Electrical hookups
- Electrical disconnection
- Respond to power outages
- Monthly meter readings
- Monitor and help with repairs of the Mini Dam (when operational)
- Temporary hookups
- Transformer replacements
- Pole and line relocation
- New pole and line installations
- Changing street lights
- Installation of new street lighting
- Assist water treatment plant with electrical issues

2. MINI DAM

The Mini Dam has not been in operation for about four years. I have been informed that Hydro-Québec does not want to purchase power produced from the Mini Dam because they would like it to first undergo studies and any upgrades needed to bring it up to date. Over the last year or so, Gilbert Georgekish, who was overseeing the Mini Dam, hired the engineering firm Stantec to conduct the requested studies. Some of the studies needed require the water level to be at its lowest, which is usually in August. Divers may need to be brought in if the water level is not low enough to check the Mini Dam's structural integrity. Each month the Mini Dam is not operational, it loses an estimated \$38,000. Getting things sorted out on how to proceed with the Mini Dam will be a priority over the next year.

3. HEAVY EQUIPMENT REVOLVING FUND

These funds are provided through the New Relationship Agreement, which helps each community with some of its equipment needs. A large percentage of the equipment in the Cree Nation Governments' specifications is for the Public Works Department, while other departments may have one or two pieces on the CNG heavy equipment revolving list. Last year, we purchased a grader, and that pretty much absorbed the whole budget. Over the summer, I will be trying to meet with the directors and managers to establish a five-year plan and prioritize the purchasing and replacing of equipment.

4. ROAD AND WALKWAYS

This department had a great winter with their crew and supervisor Roy Ratt. Their efforts in trying to keep up with the snow removal in the community were quite an accomplishment. From what I have seen so far, over the last couple of months the department has been running smoothly, but as a service provider, the objective of our ISO Certification is to try to continuously improve with customer service. A great deal of the department's regular road maintenance gets interrupted or postponed by other requests and work orders from CNW departments, organizations, entities, and community members. We are excited as we will be expecting another recruit to come on board this summer, who will assist with the growing community and help keep up with the Road and Walkways department's workload. We will do our best to improve on the previous year.



BELOW IS THE ANNUAL SUBMISSION FROM THE SUPERVISOR OF ROAD AND WALKWAYS, MR. ROY RATT.

Greetings to all people of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, I am happy to present another annual report for our community. Every year, I see improvements in our department. Working with a great team makes the job easier and the work is done properly and safely. Jason Blackned was hired as an operator on July 27, 2022, with three months' probation which ended on October 27, 2022, and passed his probation. On January 9, 2023, Gabriel Georgekish was hired as Ground maintenance worker with three months' probation which ended on April 9, 2023, and passed his probation. We also hired four seasonal workers during the winter season to help with the snow removal and workload.

We lost our dear friend and colleague Raymond Georgekish last year to a battle with cancer. Raymond worked many years with the Road and Walkways department on a seasonal basis and eventually joined the team as a permanent employee. Raymond had a very strong work ethic, great dedication, without complaints. He is surely missed every day by all staff, family, and friends.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS MANDATES

Our main mandates are to maintain the roads and sidewalks before the operations start in the community, and pick up debris and garbage on the streets for the transit to run safely. Operators fill out the Heavy Equipment Daily Inspection Checklist and Daily Equipment Report.

During winter we plough the streets, sidewalks and we apply sand and salt whenever the roads are icy and slippery. We remove snow from the streets after we clear the roads and sidewalks. In school zones, during school days we try not to remove snow between 8:30 am - 9:15 am, 11:30 am - 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm - 4:00 pm, for the safety of children.

We assist other departments with their requests for machinery to unload, load, haul, and transport equipment, and for snow removal during winter.

Following are the Departments and others we assist:

Environment Health

- Equipment lending (generator, blow heater)
- Dump truck (10-wheeler)
- Loader
- Transport machinery (bulldozer, excavator)
- Hauling material for landfill to backfill

Soil Treatment Platform

- Storing contaminated material on the treatment pad
- Moving the material to be sterilized and fertilized
- Removing treated material to a designated area
- Delivering water to start the Soil Treatment Plant
- Assisting with tarp to cover the treated soil

Energy System

- Installation of new hydro poles
- Removing old hydro poles
- Mulching a new site for installation
- Snow removal where they request, for emergencies

Drinking water

- Requests for excavators to fix water leaks, stem valve casings
- Requests for dump truck
- Blow heater to thaw out work sites in winter
- Snow removal on jobsites for emergencies

Wastewater

- Assisting in excavating sewer leakage, drainage
- Adjusting manhole and catch basins

Youth Center

- Requests for safety barriers (gate, pylons, delineator post, traffic drums, signs)
- Hauling material and supplies
- Transporting the Canoe Brigade with their equipment to km 468

Arena

- Hauling material and supplies
- Transporting scissor lift when needed
- Snow removal in front of the Zamboni and Casino entrances in winter
- Lending of material
- Putting sand and salt in front of the main entrance

Complex

- Transporting the scissor lift when needed
- Snow removal and ice buildup on the north side of the complex
- Hauling material and supplies
- Putting sand or salt in front of entrance to prevent people from slipping

C.O.O.L. Building

- Transporting material and supplies
- Snow removal and putting sand on parking area in winter
- Preparing backyard for fencing

Cultural Department

- Hauling material and supplies
- Snow removal on cultural camp sites

Public Safety

- Installing new stop signs and any other requested signs
- Removing the trailer gate and transporting it to the band warehouse yard

Rental Housing

- Unloading and hauling material and supplies
- Excavating around the housing to fix drainage
- Snow removal when requested on a worksite
- Transporting sea containers to a designated area when requested
 - Every year, snow removal is requested around the housing on a list to prevent flooding

Cree Trappers Association

- Unloading cabin material and supplies
- Snow removal on the north side of the building
- Transporting jet fuel to km 6 for spring airlift

Tawich Construction Inc.

- Water tanker rental
- Bulldozer, roller compactor rental
- Requests for fuel and material when needed in our department
- Renting computer for calibration on our dump trucks

Transport Canada

- Requested to borrow Heavy Equipment while their machinery is not working.
 - Grader
 - Loader with snowblower

Capital Works

- Soil testing
- Snow removal for housing units

Garage

- Towing
- Hauling
- Moving heavy objects

This past year, from April 2022 to March 2023, we received 120 work orders from the departments and others and managed to fulfil them accordingly.

In October 2022, we finished the backwall for our sand and salt storage building by hiring casual workers with the supervision of Roads and Walkways Supervisor Toromont Caterpillar Mechanic from Val-d'Or, who came to check the grader as the A/C was not working well. He also checked other machinery (bulldozers, snowblowers)

Last year, we purchased:

- New Snowplow 2022 - Ford F-550
- Ordered salt for de-icing and calcium for dust control

Training 2023-2024

- Project management (Supervisor) - Started March 2022
- Fine Grading Training (Operators)
- First aid training (Operators)
- WHMIS Training (Operators)
- Computer (Supervisor, Operators)

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

I just want to thank everyone who collaborated with us this past year, keep up the good work!

CNW GARAGE 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

It is my pleasure to present the Annual report 2022-2023 for the Garage Department. We have three full-time employees, one replacing a mechanic on Education Leave and one other employee on contract off and on throughout the year. We are in the process of hiring another heavy equipment mechanic.

We basically do the same thing every year. We change tires from winter to summer in the spring and vice versa in the fall. We winterize the heavy equipment in the fall to get ready for the winter, and the same for the spring. We follow the Preventive Maintenance Plan for all vehicles to get regular oil changes, and inspections to keep them all running smoothly.

We service both heavy equipment and light vehicles. There are 90 vehicles on the list for the Cree Nation of Wemindji and we also take charge of the machines for the Airport. We have 38 heavy equipment machines and 52 light vehicles. There are 20 machines that need an annual SAAQ Mechanical Inspection certificate; 19 of them are heavy equipment and one light vehicle. The inspections are done here at the garage.

We had 12 new vehicles added to the list from last year. There were four new heavy equipment machines and eight new light vehicles. We also had to scrap some vehicles because they were getting old and worn out. We can no longer get the parts on some vehicles, as they are discontinued. We had to scrap three light vehicles and four pieces of heavy equipment. Sometimes we must send the vehicles out because we do not have all the special tools to repair or diagnose the problems. Other times, we must bring in an expert mechanic who has special tools to check the machines, which we do when we have a few machines that need to be diagnosed or repaired.

Wishing everyone a pleasant and successful year on behalf of the garage staff, that is all for now.

Prepared by: **Elmer Atsyina**, *Garage Manager*

Congratulations to Elmer Atsyina, who has recently passed his probation as the Garage Manager. Elmer has accepted the challenge to take on the task of becoming a manager after more than 20 years working for CNW. Over the last few years, the Garage has been working to continue to develop the preventative maintenance plan for all our fleet. Although we struggle to keep the Ford pick-up trucks on the road, we will continue to try and improve customer service for our CNW employees each year and keep their vehicles and equipment on the road as much as possible. We will also look at a computerized inventory system for the Garage, and how we could improve our productivity and possibly incorporate some lean management tactics.

Elmer Atsyina: *Garage Manager*

Darren Matthews: *Parts Clerk*

David Visitor Jr: *Mechanic*

Wesley Visitor: *Contract Mechanic*

Darryl Gilpin: *Mechanic (on leave)*

Rita Atsyina: *Janitor*

In the last year, we had Leroy Matches and Trevor Gilpin under contract to support the Garage operations and the mechanics.

We are happy to share that recently, Marlena Saganash, a student who is completing her vocational training course, has decided to come and work at the CNW garage. It is great to see a young woman in this field and we wish her the best on completing her studies.

Thank you on behalf of all the employees of all the Department of Public Works, for taking the time to read our 2022-2023 annual report.

Have a safe and happy year,

Wayne Morrison

Director of Public Works





Community Services

Thomas Mark, *Director*

Back in 2003, I was an employee with the Cree Nation of Wemindji as the Youth Coordinator. Wow, already 20 years ago to this year, time is really flying now! Back then our small team was comprised of the Director, myself in Youth programs, the cultural coordinator, a few people in social development and one person in sports and recreation, along with a minor sports coordinator.

During my time as Youth Coordinator, one of the programs I managed was the annual canoe expedition and Nasababijuu (winter walk). They were a great learning experiences and of course, I needed to consult with the Cree land users for their knowledge expertise, for the programs to be successful. I want to acknowledge the late John Mistacheesick Sr. for his contribution and services with his Eeyou knowledge for so many years, as a guide on the annual canoe expedition and his advisory role on Nashababijuu. He has impacted many young people with his traditional Cree expertise during these land-based projects and left them with strong memories to pass on to others.

At present, I lead three departments, called in our organigram the Wellness and Cultural, the Youth Centre and the COOL Afterschool program, which together consist of over 20 employees both permanent, contract and two service providers.

The Community Service department is responsible to deliver programs and services for the members of the community. This past year, we have completed a draft strategy plan in line with our Nation's vision and have drafted our department's mission and vision, including four areas, or pillars, we identified through surveys and feedback.

Our Vision: A community working together, guided by its culture and values, that is creating a better future for all our people.

Our Mission: Working together to keep our traditions alive to ensure the overall well-being of our people by

encouraging personal growth through programs for a healthier community.

As a team, our Four main areas or pillars:

- Strengthening Cree culture – traditional skills, language, and our Wemindji values.
- Supporting education for our community to build future capacity.
- Encouraging healthy and active living
- Building upon best practices for program and service delivery in our administration

As our draft plan is to be finalized in this year, the team is already putting it into action, as you will see in the next few pages' activities and programs.

On my end, the partnership with the Cree Nation Government (CNG) under Social and Cultural is working very well. We met quite a few times throughout the year. One goal is providing us with funding opportunities for some potential projects and some of the current programming run by our department.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the CNG and along with the Cree Health board, the Communities have been brought together on the Miiyupimaatisiun Gathering in Montreal for the purpose of assisting our Local Miiyupimaatisiun Committee's in the setup of their strategies' implementation and in getting them tools to address current and trending challenges in our communities.

Two department employees retired this past year, after many years with the Cree Nation of Wemindji. Linda Stewart and Juliet Asquabaneskum will still provide their community service by sharing their Cree traditional knowledge in our events and programs.

Thanks,



Wellness and Cultural

Angela Stewart, Manager

It is my pleasure to present the annual report from the Wellness and Cultural Department for 2022-2023.

First, I would like to thank and wish our two retirees a happy retirement. May you be proud of the work you have done for the department and the community. I hope this next chapter of your life brings you endless time to do the things you love and cherish. Remember to enjoy every moment.

**** Happy Retirement to Linda Stewart and Juliet Asquabaneskum ****

It was a busy year for the department, as we ran and hosted a variety of activities and programs for the community. The department worked hard to provide programming while building relationships and partnering with various departments, entities, and organizations. I believe working together builds a healthier and stronger community. We target all ages in our events, as we strive to uphold our mission to enhance the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being of our community.

Thank you to the staff for the amazing job you do every day. You are all an important part of the team, keep being awesome. Each of you brings a unique set of gifts and skills that are essential to our services. Thank you to our Mental Health Worker and Facilitator Consultant, Michaela Decarlo, for working with us. We are grateful for your wisdom, passion, and leadership.

I encourage the community to continue participating in the programming we provide. Bring your families and friends. Come participate, come visit, or just come hang out. We are in this together.

Thank you on behalf of the Wellness & Cultural Department.

“Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.” – Henry Ford





Cultural Department

Betty Stewart, Coordinator

As the Cultural Coordinator of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, I am pleased to present this year's annual report for the very first time. I started working in the Wellness and Cultural department back in November 2021 and so far, it has been a great experience for me. The Cultural department continues to run traditional programs and activities that benefit the people in our community. The department also took part in the planning of the year-end Christmas festivities and the annual New Year's extravaganza. The Cultural department runs activities like the Craft nights, where we offer to learn how to make teepee covers or teepee doors, first snowshoe or walking out ceremony outfits, baby moss bags, and other traditional items.

The first project I carried out under the department was the geese harvesting, where the department hired six hunters to hunt and provide geese for our programming and for our community feasts. This project was a big success, as over 70 geese were harvested last year. I was honored to assist for the first big event as the new coordinator by organizing last year's annual Old Factory Visit, as it was celebrating its 35 years. This gathering improves people's mental and physical health, as they get the opportunity to go out on the land and spend time with family while enjoying the activities offered at the island.

The department works hard in planning and organizing events such as the Winter Carnival activities, first snowshoe walks, walking out ceremonies, the Berry festival, Old Factory Visit, Moosehide cleaning, Halloween, and Christmas activities. The department

also works well in collaboration with other departments such as the Youth department, the Cree Trappers Association, the Cree Health board, the Cree School Board, the Justice department and the Youth council. The department sometimes find the work challenging, due to lack of participation or the difficulty of finding workers for some events, especially in preparation for an upcoming event. But other than that, we manage to work well together as a good team and get things done.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the people who sometimes volunteer to help us with our activities or events. I also want to thank the instructors or demonstrators that offer to share their knowledge and teach our interested participants their traditional skills. I would also like to remind people that we the department is always looking for traditional food that we can share with our elders and the community.

On behalf of the Cultural department, I want to thank everyone who continuously supports our programs, and we are truly grateful for your participation. We are asking the community members to feel free to come and see us if they have any cultural ideas or suggestions, at any time. Thank you all and let us continue practicing our traditions, culture, and language.

Heritage Projects

Tamara Murdoch & Katherine Scott

Another busy year for Heritage Projects! The Cree Language Program made good progress, as the Language Coordinator position became permanent, and a temporary Program Assistant was hired. The Coordinator worked closely with Cree language and culture teachers to run new in-person and online courses and other language activities throughout the year. The Language Coordinator has also begun work on a Community Language Plan. The Mapping Project has made new progress with recordings, but decisions

on updates to the platform and data management issues are pending. The Digital Museum online exhibition, Listen! Our Language is in the Land, acquired more audio and video recordings and photographs and completed its Interpretive Plan in consultations with youth, elders, and others. Knowledge Center oral history audio recordings are being summarized and flagged for their potential to be put into booklets that will be available. A photo book started last year about the elders has been completed.





Youth Department

Betsy Hughboy, Manager

Greetings from the Youth Centre! Here is an update on the programs, events and activities that took place at the Paint Hill Uschiniich iukimikw during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

- **Adopt a Youth Goose Break Program 2022** was scheduled May 2 to 13, 2022, and four youths participated for the 2022 program. The program provided Grocery Vouchers and travel expenses for the participants to join other families during their goose break.
- **Summer Student Employment Program 2022** resumed May 24, 2022, to September 9, 2022. 144 students enrolled in the program, which includes Post-Secondary, Vocational, Adult Education and High School Students, aged 13 and up. The SSEP is funded by ASD under the Youth Program and Cree Nation of Wemindji.
- **Old Factory River 28th Annual Canoe Expedition** is a popular annual project. It took place on July 16 to 25, 2022. 19 participated in total: 16 youths and 3 guides, with a total of nine Canoes. The Expedition is always a huge success and is at times challenging, which gives the participants a great sense of pride in their accomplishment.
- **Youth Work Experience Program 2022-2023** resumed August 29, 2022, to February 24, 2023. A total of 18 participants were hired for the 2022-2023 program. The participants worked in different departments with the organization and some with other entities. The program had quite a few successes, with one youth finding a permanent position within the placement work, and another reaching the maximum of hours eligible under the program. The YWEP is funded by ASD under the Youth Program and Cree Nation of Wemindji.
- **Stay in School Secondary 5 Drivers Ed Program 2022-23** started on January 18, 2023. The program started late, and had nine students, who committed themselves to remaining enrolled in the 2 phases of the program with weekly online classes to meet until March 9, 2023.
- **Youth Incentive Program** took place on February 18 -26, 2023 for students who excelled in their high school studies for the school year of 2021-2022. This year, a winter trip took place, as a survey was done with previously selected students and they recommended a winter trip for the upcoming excursion. Maquatua Eeyou School selects the students based on performance, schoolwork, behaviour, and attendance. They select the top 2 students per class in all 11 classes at the high school. This year, 22 students selected, and 18 students went on the trip. The places they went over nine days were Wendake, Val-Cartier, Quebec City and Montreal. The trip was a success.
- **Mental Health Week** was scheduled for five days between February 27 and March 3, 2023; it held in collaboration with other CNW Departments and entities such as the Cree Health Board, the Eeyou Eenuu Police, the Wemindji Trappers Association, the Local Women's Association, the CNG Justice Department, and Newmont. Planning and organizing was lead by Youth Chief and Youth Council. The weeklong event was filled with different activities taking place within different buildings in the community: workshops at the school, gatherings at the Community Hall, Cultural Dwellings. One of our guests was Brigitte Lacquette, Canadian Woman Hockey Player, who played for Team Canada in the 2018 Winter Olympics. She offered a keynote speech to the community members. The week ended with an entertainment night.
- **Youth Winter Camp 2023** was scheduled for March 6 to 15, 2023. A total of twelve participated, five guides and seven youths. The program is a ten-day, land-based camp and took place at Old Factory Spring Camp, where youth go camping during the winter and engage in traditional activities. The program provides groceries and travel expenses for the participants to enjoy winter camping along with guides.

And other events, activities, and workshops,

- **Youth & Elders Gathering** – April 5, 2022
- **Teepee Cover Making Workshop** – April 4 – 8, 2022
- **Gun Cover Making Workshop** – April 25 – 29, 2022
- **Youth Spirit week** – April 25 – 29, 2022
- **Skeet Shooting Contest** – April 27, 2022
- **Ouudehcnoud & Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop** – May 23 – 27, 2022
- **First Aid & CPR Training** – May 30 – 31, 2022
- **Pride Month Activities (Flag Rise & Social Night, Parade)** – June 2022
- **Summer Bash Youth Gala** – June 23, 2022
- **Annual Running Marathon** – July 14, 2022
- **Annual Bike Marathon** – July 21, 2022
- **Cree Nation Youth Day – Bonfire Party** – August 16, 2022
- **Moosehead Cleaning** – October 5, 2022

- **Various Halloween Activities** – October 2022
- **Moosehide Mittens Making Workshop** – November 7 – 18, 2022
- **Various Christmas Activities** – December 2022
- **Youth Achievement Awards** – December 12, 2022
- **Cree Fair 2023** – February 15 – 16, 2023
- **Music Workshop** – March 2, 2023

Throughout the year, the Youth Centre also held various Social Nights, Movie Nights, Theme Days, Mini Tournaments, Competitions, Contests, and Youth Consultations.

In closing, the Cree Nation of Wemindji Youth Department and Youth Council would like to thank the Youth Programs 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 participated in the programs, both youth and the land-based program guides; with you, all of 2022–2023 was a success, thank you!





C.O.O.L. After School Program

Trudy Mark-Hughboy, Manager

Waachiyaahkw misiwaa!

On behalf of the C.O.O.L. After School Program, I present the 2022-2023 Annual Report.

This year, we are looking forward to finally implementing new programming and services, and that includes:

- Drop-off services for those on the waiting list, starting this August
- Purchasing playground equipment for our facility
- Providing a variety of clubs and programming for Grades 4 to 6
- A focus on more Cree language and culture program

Activities and events from April 2022 to March 2023:

- Children's Easter Egg Hunt
- Goose Break Vouchers Giveaway
- Microsoft Applications Trainings
- MASKS CAME OFF in June
- End of services for 2021-2022 school year with 52 registered
- Traditional Arts and Science Summer Camp – July 4 to August 5, 2022 with 34 registered
- COOL toys sent to Old Factory Visit
- New school year 2022-2023 Services – August 16, 2022 to June 21, 2023
- Truth and Reconciliation Day – Wear Orange to Remember Children's Participation Draws
- Annual Family Trick-or-Treating Draws
- Children's Costumes Contests
- Planning for NYE celebrations
- Christmas Tea Party with Parents and Children
- Children's Christmas Tree and Snowman contests
- Mental Health First-Aid Training
- Mental Health Week – COOLing Down at Home activities

- Family Day Movie Night vouchers
- Online workshops with Disability Programs and Specialized Services

Our daily operations have been like riding a roller coaster these past 3 years. We had our ups and downs, some exciting and some not so much, but I am so happy to say that the ride looks like it is about to get much smoother.

Registrations for the new school year usually take place on the 2nd week of August, but to give parents a heads up, the new registrations will be happening during the first week of August. We can't wait to welcome some new children to our building!

Lastly, we would especially like to thank our sponsors Newmont and Niskamoon for funding our Traditional Arts and Science Summer camp every year. It is because of these corporations we can provide children from ages 5 to 12 years old a summer filled with new discoveries and older traditions. The camp is running from July 4th to August 4th this year, and we hope to have many registrations.

We wish you a great summer filled with happy memories and good times!

Mishtiich chiniskumitinaawau misiwaa,







Sports and Facilities

Thomas Moore, *Director*

Hi,

In a nutshell, the Sports and Facilities Department's role is to get the community active. We do this by coordinating programs and activities that encourage community members to be physically active. We also operate and maintain the spaces in which these activities generally occur.

While the pool has been an issue once again, I am generally pleased with the progress we have made. I am very proud of the team this year, as we battled some health issues at the supervisory levels from January to March. We seemed to experience these health issues all at once but had our internal staff step up to ensure that programs activities, and operations continued as planned. Big thanks to the team.

We are starting to see an increase in regular usage of the ballfield, arena, gym, and fitness. We had several youth softball teams attend tournaments and practice regularly at the ballfield. We have been able to field several men's and women's fastpitch teams, as well as run a few local leagues and tournaments. Our Fitness team increased the events offered to the community and saw an increase in participation in the Snowshoe Race and Fitness Challenge. The fitness center has also been used regularly by a group of young men and ladies. Thanks to a collaboration with the Wemindji Stingers, we were able to see an increase in youth participating in volleyball last fall.

We are also starting to see more local youth interested in working in our field, as we have had several employees work for the Sports Academy these past few years. We are also starting to see some youth pursue post-secondary education within the field as well. Although we will miss their presence over the next few years, we are excited for what they will bring back to the community.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate Sam Hughboy on his retirement as Arena Supervisor and wish him all the best in his next chapter. Sam played a key role in shaping the operations at Mawabou Gardens and keeping it running throughout the years. We will miss his steady influence.

I would also like to wish all the best to our long-time Minor Sports Coordinator Sequan Visitor, who moved onto another role within the organization. Sequan was vital in making sure our youth had opportunities to take part in various sporting events throughout the region. She also moonlighted as President of Wemindji Slyfoxes' Fanclub. We will miss her stable presence.

Congratulations are also in order for Diana Shashaweskum, who reached 15 years of service recently. Her fingerprints and impact are felt throughout the department. Wishing her another 15 with the organization.

Furthermore, big thanks to the Facilities team who were able to manage keeping Mawabou Gardens operating while preparing for the new Arena. There were a few issues that were outside their control throughout the year, but the crew adapted to shifting demands and priorities well. Big thanks to Diana, Daniel, Dean, Fred, Julian, Robert, Adrian, as well as to our in-house consultant Stan.

We are looking forward to 2023-2024 and hoping that we will be writing about all the events at the new Arena. I will pass onto the Sports and Facilities Programs supervisors to go into greater detail on the activities held during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.



Sports and Recreation

Brian T. Ottereyes, *Coordinator*

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

ANNUAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

- **Annual Invitational Senior Basketball Tournament** – June 2022
- **Annual Invitational Senior Fastball Tournament** – July 2022
- **Annual Invitational Senior Softball Tournament** – September 2022
- **Annual Invitational Senior Volleyball Tournament** – October 2022
- **Annual Senior Hockey and Broomball Tournament** – February 2023
- **Annual Senior Broomball Tournament** – February 2023

LOCAL TOURNAMENTS

- **Local Broomball Tournament** – April 2022
- **Local Floor Hockey Tournament** – April 2022
- **Local Darts Tournament** – April-July-October
- **Local Poker Tournament** – April 2022
- **Local Scrabble Tournament** – April 2022
- **Local Badminton Tournament** – May 2022
- **Local Blind Volleyball Tournament** – May 2022
- **Local Ball Hockey Tournament** – July 2022
- **Local Coed Volleyball** – July 2022
- **Local Fastball Tournament** – September 2022
- **Local Softball Tournament** – September 2022
- **Local Volleyball Tournament** – September 2022
- **Local Senior Hockey Tournament** – November 2022
- **Local Coed Broomball Tournament** – January 2023

LOCAL LEAGUES

- **Local Senior Fastball/Softball League** – July-September
- **Local Senior Volleyball League** – October-November

LOCAL PROGRAMS/EVENTS

- **Skeet Shooting Contest** – April
- **Coffee Break** – June-October-December-January-March
- **Softball Game and BBQ** – June
- **Local Basketball Camp** – June
- **Summer Games** – July
- **Wemindji Birthday** – July 15
- **Walleye Derby** – August
- **Local Volleyball Camp** – October
- **Halloween Events** – October
- **Christmas and New Year's Events** – December
- **Winter Games** – March



Arena and Complex

Diana Shashaweskum, Manager

Greetings! Yet another good year of growing and developing our Sports Facilities team. I had a good year learning and participating in the training opportunities that relate to the responsibilities as the Manager of the Recreation Facilities. We have new goals to achieve, as the new arena is getting closer to its construction completion, with new technology software systems and other related training needs. Our main goal is to have our staff prepared and trained. The excitement and reality of the new operations is growing for our staff, for our clientele, and for community members. This has been something we been longing for since the announcement of the approval of a new arena for Wemindji.

OUR SPORTS FACILITIES TEAM

- Arena Maintenance, Daniel Asquabaneskum (Interim Supervisor)
- Arena Maintenance, Fred Asquabaneskum Jr.
- Arena Maintenance, Dean Shanush
- Arena Janitor, Brandon Kakabat
- Arena Janitor, Brendan Shashaweskum
- Complex Supervisor Maintenance, William Stewart
- Complex Maintenance, Warren Mistacheesick
- Complex Janitor, Charlene S. Mayappo (on leave)
- Complex Janitor, Priscilla Mayappo (hired January 2023)
- Complex Janitor, Cecilia Georgekish Hughboy (temporary replacement)
- Groundskeeper, Craig Visitor (Outdoor Courts)
- Ice Resurfacers, Adrian Atsynia (Arena)
- Ice Resurfacers, Julian Mark (Arena)
- Work-Experience Worker, Robert Sam (Arena Maintenance)

SOME OF THE EVENTS/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/events
- Cree Nation of Wemindji - Local annual general assembly
- Private swimming party/birthday party
- Private group activities/events
- Christmas staff party

OUR SPORTS FACILITIES TEAM

Our Sports Facilities Maintenance Staff and Supervisors

- Building Operations and Maintenance, with ORFA (Ontario Recreation Facilities Association)
- Building Management and Operations, with ORFA (Ontario Recreation Facilities Association)
- Preventative Maintenance of Facilities, with EPIC (Educational Program Innovations Center)
- Ice Making and Painting, with ORFA (Ontario Recreation Facilities Association)
- New Arena - Trainings gradually started in the winter of 2023
- Project Management - Algonquin College Corporate Training (continuing to summer/fall 2023)

We are still in the learning steps regarding the software system for operating the new Arena; it will gradually get easier for the staff with continuous training.

We are looking forward to giving the staff more training opportunity as needs are identified on specific areas.

OUR FACILITIES

Mawabou Gardens Arena

Off-season was quiet one, as we have not hosted any major events in the facility, so our staff was able to focus on the preparation of the upcoming season. A part of the staff was assigned to the ballfield with the assistance of a contractual groundskeeper to maintain the field throughout the summer season. We hosted the CNW staff game and BBQ, softball and fastpitch leagues and regional events led by our Recreation department.

Maintenance and operation

During the season, our staff schedules covered from 16 hours on weekdays, 12-13 hours on the weekends. Day shift scheduled staff prepare and maintain the facility for the use of clients. Hours vary during hosted events, as they require more operational hours. We added three workers to our team this year, one under the work experience program and two contractual Ice Resurfacers, to assist our maintenance staff.

Our sports programming was held from October to April, with the hockey and broomball led by our Sports Academy. Minor Sports and Recreation oversaw the rink schedule for our minor and senior team practice slots. We also hosted events like our local and regional Hockey and Broomball Tournaments.

One of our main concerns in operations was the possibility of system failure during the season. Our system held throughout the season, and it was great to be able to host events for the last season at our beloved Mawabou Gardens. On the evening of Sunday, April 16, maintenance staff reported the ice was melting and noticed the system was not operating as it should have. The morning of April 17, maintenance work was performed to try and get the system running again. There was no possibility to continue with the system, and our staff was unable to fix the issue, as the system was old and spending money for repairs was unnecessary.

The last regional event was our Challenge Cup Hockey Tournament (hosted on March 30–April 2 by our Recreation Department). It was close to a full house for the last game of the evening, the “A” Finals between Wemindji Wolves and Eastmain Thunder. We can say it was one of the best games played in our Arena, with talent from both teams, back-to-back plays throughout the game, tremendous goalies on both ends, still scoreless at the start of the third period. The fans were excited, not knowing how the game would end, as it was anyone’s game. What a game to have witnessed! Our Wemindji Wolves took this last Championship at Mawabou Gardens Arena. Fans and spectators were invited to the rink to celebrate the Wolves, and the excitement in the children/youth and everyone was something memorable.

New Arena

Training development started in the winter of 2022 with preparation for our staff. We have been gradually ordering the furniture and equipment needed for the new facility. The process of naming the new Arena started in April of 2022 and will continue as the construction completion is scheduled for spring or summer of 2023. The excitement in the community has increased throughout the construction, and staff training is one of our priorities.

Sports Complex

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

Swimming pool operations have been challenging, we had to shut down the pool a few times, either for long or short periods of time, due to mechanical issues. Inspections have been completed in the past year or so, to gather two sub-contractors’ recommendations and feedback. The conclusion was that our pool needs a new filtration system now, and sudden system failure is a concern. With problems getting worse and happening more often, it is most likely our pool operations will be closed until we get a new system installed.

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

The facility is made available for other departments and organizations to host small or large activities and events. Our staff prepares the premises as required.





Fitness Centre

Natasha Stewart, Coordinator

On behalf of the Fitness, Gymnasium and Swimming Pool services, I am pleased to share the activities, programs and events that were conducted over the year.

Our team includes myself (Natash Stewart) as the Fitness Programs Coordinator. Our Fitness Attendants, Carey Atsynia and Gregory Louttit, provide services and assistance to the Fitness Centre's clientele. Vanessa Gilpin and Zachary Shashaweskum, Complex Attendants, work to ensure that the environment is safe for the users in the gymnasium.

Marshall Stewart, who is our certified lifeguard, currently works in the Fitness Center. The swimming pool started the year off with an Aquatic Supervisor (contract), Mathious Hetu-Boulianne, Marshall Stewart and Tanner Gilpin as certified national lifeguards, and Andrew Gibson as a part-time lifeguard. Justin MacDonald also got certified as a Bronze Medallion. Our full-time services ended in August 2022, and our part-time schedule began from August to November. Ever since, the swimming pool has not been open, due to not having certified lifeguards.

I would like to commend the resilience shown by our staff, and for making opening and providing our services to the community members throughout the year possible. Our plans to encourage people to use our services are in full swing. The evidence for the positive role that fitness plays in people's lives is undeniable, for both physical and mental health, and we are rightly proud of the role we play in supporting our members to live healthier lives.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time to help out and attend our programs, activities and events, and making them successful. I would also like to encourage more of our community members to engage in and promote healthy and physical lifestyles, and to utilize our services.

EVENTS

- Members Coffee Break – April 2022
- Annual Walk and Run Event – September 17, 2022
- Open House Fitness Center – December 2022
- Free Fitness – Mental Health Week February 26 to March 4, 2023

- Fitness Competition – March 2023
- Weight Loss Challenge – January-March 2023
- Snowshoe Challenge – Winter Carnival March 2023
- Twist Training Certification Course – January 2023

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

- Youth, Women's and Men's Nights
- Women's Fitness Assistant
- Lunch Fit
- Personal Training

STAFF THAT ALSO WORKED WITH US OVER THE YEAR

- Lindy Georgekish
- Gabriel Georgekish
- Tanner Gilpin
- Mathious Hetu-Boulianne
- Andrew Gibson

Fitness Center Total Attendance Monthly 2022

April	553
May	552
June	483
July	400
August	337
September	376
October	418
November	392
December	201
January	432
February	552
March	447
Total	5142



Minor Sports

Shawna Macdonald, *Coordinator*

We would like to thank everyone who has volunteered their time, whether in coaching or in managing a team, as well as parents or family members who drove the players to their games and tournaments. Thank you all for your continuous support.

Here is a list of activities and events we have hosted and some coming up.

- First Nations Minor Hockey and Broomball tournament
- Hockey Camp
- Minor Softball League
- Golf Benefit
- Old Factory Visit
- Wemindji's Birthday
- Hockey Development School
- Broomball Clinic
- Coaching Clinic
- Referee Clinic
- End of Season banquet and Awards
- Minor, Jr. and Class C Tournament
- New Years Extravaganza / Christmas Festivities
- 4-Week Sports Summer Camp
- Sports Academy
- Sports Academy with Maquatua Eeyou School

We are in the process of getting our Minor Sports Committee going and hoping to have it running by the start of 2023-2024 season.

We are open to new ideas, so if you have anything you would like to share with us, we would greatly appreciate it.





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



Dennis Georgekish, La Grande Alliance
Community Information Officer

Tel: 819-978-7501

E-mail: gacio@wemindji.ca



21 Hilltop Drive, P.O. Box 60,
Wemindji, Quebec J0M 1L0

Tel: (819) 978-0264

Fax: (819) 978-0258

wemindji.ca