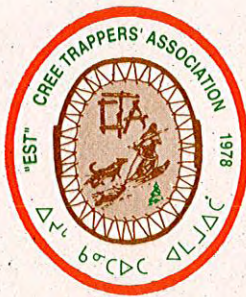


Oujé-Bougoumou



M. Patrick Beauchesne, Directeur
Direction du Patrimoine écologique et des parcs
Ministère du Développement durable, de
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Agreement. In effect, we share with the HFTCC many common concerns about the implications of the Plan Nord and its implementation.

With this in mind, we offer the following general recommendations to MDDEP with respect to the planning for the implementation of the Plan Nord.

1. ***Taking into account the recent history of development in the James Bay territory/Eeyou Istchee.*** As MDDEP well knows, communities in Eeyou Istchee, both Cree and non-aboriginal, are living with the 40-year history of the opening up of the territory to hydro-electric development, forestry and mining. In many ways, the 'Plan Nord' arrived, with the Québec government, many years ago. This leads us to the conclusion that it is essential that the Québec government in general, and, in the context of this round of consultations, MDDEP, look closely at the experience of planning in northern Québec as reflected in the development of the James Bay territory.
2. ***Forestry in the south.*** For the visitor to Eeyou Istchee from the south, the signs of forestry development are very widespread, and extend roughly as far north as the Broadback (and further in the eastern part of the territory). The effects on the land of forestry operations are wide ranging, and we can see that it will be very difficult to launch a Plan Nord policy of protecting land and ecosystems which does not recognize what many people would think of as the industrial nature of commercial forestry. It is still very unclear how forestry will be addressed in the Plan Nord, and this is a challenge for any consultation process at this time.
3. ***Hydro-electric development in the north.*** Beyond the Broadback River, we have the La Grande hydro-electric development. This project, nearly complete now after almost forty years of construction work, has changed the rivers and lakes of much of the northern half of Eeyou Istchee by a combination of river diversions involving all of the main river systems and the creation of reservoirs with a combined area of roughly 15,000 sq. km. (about the same area as the logged northern forest to the south). Although it is always possible that further hydro-electric development will take place, the economically attractive sites and river systems have been used. At least in the area south of the 55th parallel, we do not expect major changes to take place. However, we do believe that it is important to understand what we have learned from the La Grande project as we see it today, as the development of a river basin with an area of well over 200,000 sq. km.
4. ***Mining.*** Mining has affected a much smaller area in Eeyou Istchee, something like a tenth of a percent. We do not know what the future will hold for the Cree and the non-aboriginal communities in the region, but we do know that there is a general expectation that mining will be important in many ways to the economy of the region when hydro-electric development is

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Eastmain

Whapmagoosue

Chisasibi

Wemindji

Mistissini

Waskaganish

Nemaska

Waswanipi

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over, particularly if the forestry industry is in decline. It seems to us that it is the mining sector which is particularly affected by the Plan Nord, even if the areas directly affected by mining are small.

5. **Roads and road corridors.** All of these categories of development referred to above require roads and create access to large areas which previously could only be reached by air. Many of the impacts the Cree have experienced as users of the land are related to the large number of visitors who come in to take advantage of these new transportation corridors. One of the obvious challenges of the Plan Nord is to find a way to take into account the effects, both environmental and social, of these new transportation corridors.
6. **What do we really know about wildlife and wildlife ecology?** One of the issues which has taken us by surprise is just how little discussion has taken place about the ecological knowledge and understanding needed to support a public strategy as ambitious as the Plan Nord. We believe that the early stages of planning for the implementation of the Plan Nord simply have not taken the importance of the knowledge needed for implementation. We strongly recommend, therefore, that this subject receive much more attention, and that organizations like the Cree Trappers' Association, with a direct interest in these matters, be brought into the discussion.
7. **The use of wildlife resources.** We mentioned above the principle that implementing the Plan Nord depends very strongly on an adequate information and knowledge basis. This observation leads us directly to the matter of understanding the use of wildlife resources. The Cree Trappers' Association represents a community of hunters, and we are therefore keenly aware of the importance of understanding general trends or cycles in wildlife populations, particularly the species we use as hunters. However, we are not alone. In the last forty years, a large non-aboriginal hunting and fishing economy has developed in our region. The numbers of people involved is large, much larger than the Cree population. But the use of wildlife of this new and rapidly expanding population is poorly understood. For some species, notably moose, the information is detailed and useful. For other species, this is not the case. In the coming years, it will be important to confront this issue, and ask serious and thoughtful questions about what we need to understand about the human use of wildlife resources in Eeyou Istchee.

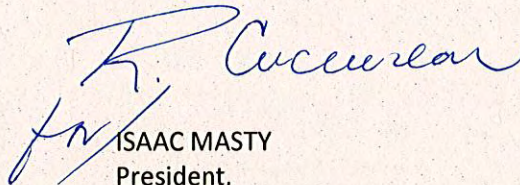
These, then, are the key themes which we believe the Québec government, and in particular MDDEP, need to address as they move forward with the idea of planning for different categories of land receiving differing degrees of protection from human disturbance.



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If you require additional observations or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,


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