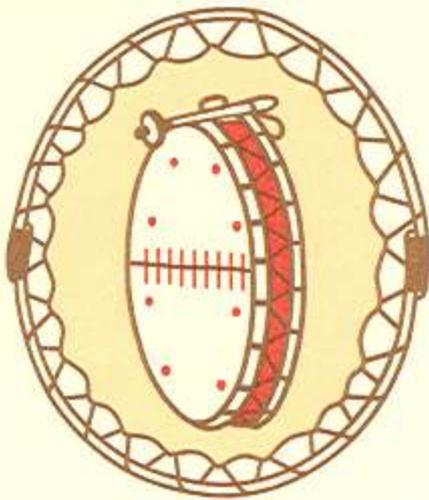


Presentation to Cree Justice Symposium

Leisure, Sports & Recreation in Eeyou Istchee

JANUARY 2009



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A Glimpse of Today's Sports & Recreation in Eeyou Istchee

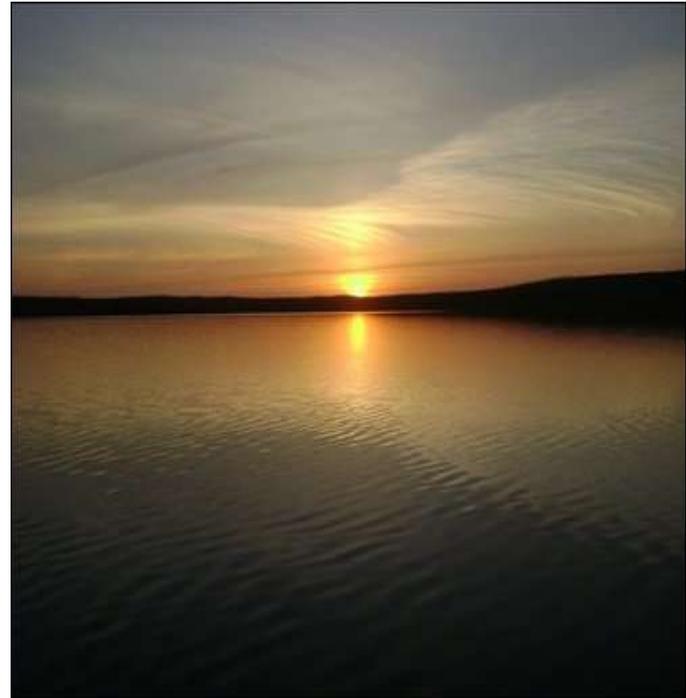


Leisure, Sports and Recreation in Eeyou Istchee

- There are significant changes taking place within the Cree Nation. These changes impact the society and culture of Cree people and specifically, Cree youth;
- In light of these changes, it is critical for the Cree communities and entities to redefine their vision and strategic directions, as a first steps to developing a roadmap in order to enhance programs and provide quality services to the Cree population.

BACKGROUND

- In November 2006, the conceptual plan to in order to enhance and develop sports and recreation in the Cree Nation was submitted to the GCCEI/CRA Executive/Executive Committee;
- GCCEI/CRA Executive/Executive Committee then recommended the establishment of a department charged with the organization and implementation of recreational programs;
- In June 2007, the GCCEI/CRA Executive/Executive Committee approved the hiring of the CRA regional recreation coordinator.



Structure - CRA Leisure, Sports & Recreation Department

- In collaboration with Director, Coordinator, and Recreation Consultant preliminary structure of the CRA Leisure, Sports & Recreation Department was submitted to the office of the CRA Director General for the CRA restructuring implementation committee;
- The drawing of structural concepts have helped us forecast on how the department will look like as well as services and programs required for such department;
- Also the Consolidated CRA By-law aligning with the restructuring has been prepared by the implementation committee for the political leadership's review;
- The structure for CRA Leisure, Sports & Recreation has been approved by the Council/Board on June 11.

The Benefits of Healthy Lifestyle



Why Sports & Recreation in Cree communities

- The recreation and sports in the Cree communities has proven to contribute in the personal enrichment and well-being of a person and it has demonstrated to have a positive effect on the person's self-esteem;
- Practicing of recreational and sporting activities is also an excellent means of dealing with stress and to prevent and treat certain health problems;
- Recreation and sports provide positive environment to motivate youth and reduces feeling of isolation;
- The feeling of isolation can lead to negative social behavior, but it is not always the ultimate reason why social issues exist in our communities.

History on Cree Healthy Lifestyle

- Crees lived a healthy lifestyle before the drastic changes that affected our culture;
- Crees used to travel by canoe and portage in the summer, and by snowshoes in the winter as a way of life as form of daily physical activity;
- Other physical activities;
- Proper nutrition.

History on Athletic Programs & Student Activities – Residential School Days

- Track & Field at the end of the school year for both genders;
- Hockey program for boys with limited development on program;
- The Crees were very dominant in sports like hockey, they had to separate the Cree players Cree because of their competitiveness or skill level;
- Crees were recognized as professionals in archery and canoeing;
- No organized or limited athletic programs for girls;
- Other fun games like soccer (not organized or training involved);

Recreation Activities & Facilities in 1970's in Eeyou Istchee

- As few communities had elementary schools, there was a slight improvement recreation & sports activities for the students;
- Outdoor rinks were constructed in some communities for the use of the students during school hours and for the public after school hours;
- Few schools had indoor gymnasiums like Mistissini elementary school & Fort George secondary-elementary school;
- Fort George now known as “Chisasibi” after the relocation from Fort George Island – Sand Park High School.

Introductory on Sports to Cree Students – south 1970's

- The Cree students who attended schools in the south like La Tuque, Hull, and in Ontario were introduced to little more variety of sports programs and therefore brought certain sports and recreation activities to their communities along with their skills that they had developed in certain sport;
- At the same time, students who attended school in Cree community were introduced to sports during phys. Ed classes;
- Ultimately, hockey became a leading sport in the Cree communities as demonstrated by the Cree students who were attending school in the south;

Introductory on Sports to Cree Students – south 1970's

- Softball also became popular in the coastal communities;
- Volleyball and basketball became noticeable in the Cree communities while the sport of hockey was growing as a pioneer sport in the Cree Nation (Lafleur, Dryden, and Orr generation);
- Activities were organized by the communities were very limited during the 70's;
- In the late seventies, schools began organizing activities and programs for the students during school year;
- The Cree youth who attended school outside (south) the Cree community had certain advantages in taking part of the sports programs that were offered by the school.

Cree Tournaments & Special Events during 70's

- Hockey tournaments or exhibition games were organized by Cree communities like Waskaganish, Mistissini, Fort George (Chisasibi);
- The sport of broomball for women & men eventually came into existence in the Cree communities and later became the winter sport for women;
- Regional Traditional Summer Games (Pow-Wow) were organized in certain communities like Mistissini and other coastal Cree communities– mainly for adults;
- Softball tournaments, mainly on Fast pitch for men became the leading summer sport in the coastal Cree communities during the 70's (Wrangler Days).

Initial Youth Programs – 70's to early 80's

- Certain sports programs were developed and carried out by the Cree communities like hockey in the inland coast as well as hockey & fast pitch in the coastal region;
- The elements that were incorporated in the sports programs for the youth were discipline and curfew;
- Coaching was already in existence during the 70's and the individuals involved were very dedicated to the sports development programs for the youth;
- The programs carried out for the youth were quite successful due to active community support and committed coaches involved;
- Unfortunately, lack of funding for youth sports programs was a major obstacle for ongoing programs.

First CRA Recreation Office – late 70's

- With the advent of the signing of the JBNQA and opening the CRA & CSB offices in Val d'Or in 1975, certain Crees were employed in these offices along with Non-natives and Algonquins;
- **The first Regional Recreation Director was Lloyd Stackhouse;**
- In the late 70's, the Crees started shinny hockey & eventually putting a hockey team together known as CRA Drummers to play in the Labatt Circuit League (Recreational Hockey);
- The CRA Drummers hockey team eventually took part at the hockey tournament held in Amos and the team won;
- **Mr. Allan Bush was one of the key organizers of the CRA Drummers hockey team.**

Cree Hockey Tournament of the Century

- After when the CRA Drummers won the hockey tournament in Amos, the idea of organizing the hockey tournament for the Crees officially initiated;
- Grand Chief Billy Diamond appointed Mr. Allan Bush to the regional recreation director position;
- Mr. Bush was with the Cree School Board as the Student Affairs technician at the time;
- The initial mandate of the appointment was to initiate logistical planning with respect to the organizing of the first Cree Hockey Tournament in Val d'or.

Cree Hockey Tournament of the Century

- In 1980, the first Cree Hockey Tournament was organized for the Crees;
- The number of teams invited from Quebec and Ontario to the tournament had to be limited in order to launch out the first Cree hockey tournament;
- **The intent of the tournament was to raise funds for the CRA drummers hockey team with the plan to bring the Crees in one place and give them the chance to do their Christmas shopping for their families;**
- The core group to organize the tournament were members like Allan Bush, Eddie Diamond, Abel Bosum, Sidney Ottereyes, Andy Bourdrias, and others:

Cree Hockey Tournament of the Century

- Since the tournament had no operating budget, the work carried out for the tournament had to be done strictly on volunteer basis;
- There were no cash prizes awarded to the champions, just medals and trophies as the intent was to organize the tournament in the spirit of brotherhood and sportsmanship;
- Part of the reason for not granting cash prizes was to keep the operating costs to a minimum in order to generate revenue for CRA Drummers hockey team;
- The inscription fee for Class A was in the neighborhood of \$600.00 in the early years.

Founder of the Hockey & Broomball Tournaments

- Since Mr. Allan Bush was the initial coordinator of the Cree Nation Invitational Hockey & Broomball tournament, he became the founder of the annual event;
- Mr. Bush is also the founder of the Annual Neoskweskau Memorial Hockey & Broomball tournament in Mistissini;
- Also a founder of the Albert Mianscum Memorial Annual Hockey & Broomball tournament in Oujebougoumou.

Purpose of the Val D'or Annual Hockey & Broomball tournament

- The original intent of the annual tournament was to raise funds for the CRA drummers;
- The efforts eventually shifted to disbursing the revenues generated from the tournament to charitable reserved funds for Cree children and youth;
- The mission and vision of the ongoing fundraising drive from the tournament proceeds led to the creation of Cree Children's Charitable organization "Tommy James Wapachee Foundation".

Tommy James Wapachee Foundation

- Tommy James Wapachee (from Nemaska) was the first Cree baby who was deceased from contaminated water in the Cree territory;
- Since the Cree Health Board (CHB) had no funding for specialized care program in cases like this, the tournament organizing committee began transferring the proceeds from the tournament to the foundation account – which was reserved as “finding the cure fund”;
- The CHB was later set up to specialized programs for Cree patients, but the revenues generated from the tournament were still geared to children & youth projects or programs;

Recap on Leaders of C.N.I.T./C.R.E.E.

- **Allan Bush** – Oujebougoumou (early 80's)
- **John Kitchen** – Waswanipi (mid 80's)
- **Walter Hester JR** – Waskaganish (late 80's to early 90's)
- **Ernie Moses** – Waskaganish (1990's)
- **John Henry Wapachee** – Nemaska (late 90's)
- **Jean-Baptist Loon** – Mistissini (early years of 2000)
- **Charles J. Hester** – Waskaganish;
- **Paul Shecapio** – Oujebougoumou - (present).

Recreation Activities & Facilities in 1980's

- While Schools were built in the Cree communities along with gymnasiums, the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi was completed with new gymnasium for students of the Cree Nation;
- More activities and programs were carried out for the youth within the schools and in certain Cree communities;
- The Cree communities began recruiting the initial stages of community recreation based programs for their community members by engaging the services of recreation specialists.

Community Recreation in the Cree communities in 1980's

- In the early 80's, even with limited recreation facilities and funding, more Cree Nation Bands recruited the concept of having an ongoing recreation program in their communities;
- As a result of the JBNQA, the Cree youth became very politically oriented Nation pursuing their studies in fields like business administration etc..
- On the other hand, while many youth were studying business administration or vocational programs in college institutions, few Cree students started pursuing their studies in community recreation;
- Generally, the main influence that has impacted on the Cree youth in the 80's was LEADERSHIP.

Original CRA Recreation Office – 2ND PHASE

- **At the time when Simeon Pash took over, certain programs were initiated namely training for community recreation program;**
- Certain Cree communities began recruiting additional department (recreation & sports) within their administrative budgets and began hiring full-time recreation directors & technicians;
- The core responsibility of the regional office was to continue on the coordination of the hockey & broomball tournament in collaboration with the local recreation personnel;
- The other mandate of the regional office was to set up the department in series of developing a regional recreation strategic plan through consultations and compilation of Cree community profile on facilities, services, and programs;
- **The progress in setting up the department was eventually dissolved due to the decentralization;**
- Since most communities had recreation departments and local personnel, it served no further purpose in having a regional office.

Recap on CRA Regional Recreation Coordinators

- Since the signing of the James Bay & Northern Quebec Agreement and the opening of the Cree Regional Authority administration offices, the following persons have served in the office regional recreation:
 - **Lloyd Stackhouse;**
 - **Allan Bush;**
 - **Simeon Pash;**
 - **Jeff Spencer;**
 - **John Henry Wapachee – August 2007 to present.**

Recreation in Cree Communities in 1980's & 1990's

- The recreation directors had mandates to assume full responsibility on the program development and coordination of activities, projects, and programs for their communities;
- At the same time, the recreation directors were given the challenge to assume responsibility of the annual Val d'Or tournament (C.N.I.T.);
- The recreation directors began holding their meetings in order to exchange information, and more specifically to the planning & coordination of the Cree Nation Invitational Tournament;
- The coordination C.N.I.T. a major regional responsibility for the recreation directors that it led to spending less time with their paid roles and responsibilities.

Recreation in Cree Communities in 1980's & 1990's

- As part of the objective of meeting the needs of the community members, each local administration began expanding its local recreation department by recruiting additional personnel;
- The expansion of each department allowed the recreation director to take part on the regional recreation directors meetings and Cree Nation Invitational Tournament, but still part of the job description regarding each recreation director;
- The local programming, coordination of activities, and leadership began to suffer at the local level due to the absence of the recreation director “the leader”;
- In essence, more recreation directors were spending more time at the regional level than at the local level.

Community Development during 1980's & 1990's

- The Cree leadership was also very occupied with community development namely toward construction of housing, community infrastructure, and public buildings;
- As a result, the focus on program development and services were not the center of attention at the time;
- Communities eventually shifted their plans toward programs and services as a result of slight increased financial resources.

Works Carried Out to Enhance Regional Recreation – Late 90's

- **Jeff Spencer was hired on contractual basis as the Regional Recreation Coordinator under the CRA Community Services;**
- The role of the coordinator to the local recreation department was to provide the necessary support in terms of filtering information and assist in program development & management when necessary;
- At the regional sector, the coordinator was in charge of the regional recreation strategic planning, coordination of the recreation training plan, and provide administrative support on the Cree Nation Invitational Tournament organizing committee.

Action Plan for Regional Recreation – Late 90's

- With advent of hiring the regional recreation coordinator, plans were set to redesign the concept and role of regional recreation;
- To develop working relations with the CRA;
- To implement plans that evolved from the recreation strategic planning and needs assessment such as training for the recreation directors;
- To develop plans in order provide ongoing training for the local recreation personnel including recreation facility managers;
- To develop the necessary structure for the regional recreation suitable for the recreation directors and regional recreation sub-committees, namely Cree Nation Invitational Tournament.

Challenges and Obstacles on Regional Recreation – Late 1990's

- Enhance support;
- To design proper structure respecting the regional recreation with its mission and objectives;
- To secure the required funding for projects, programs, and training plan at the regional level.

Accomplishments on Regional Recreation during 1995 - 2000

- Developing working relations with the Cree leadership, clearing uncertainties, and gaining support;
- Completion and Implementation on certain components on the needs assessment and planning process for support and funding;
- Implementation of the regional recreation office and engagement of coordinator;
- Development of better communication network amongst the recreation directors through series of meetings and exchange of information;
- Better program development and leadership at the local recreation departments.

Accomplishments on Regional Recreation during 1995 - 2000

- Implementation of community recreation training plan and securing of training funds;
- Expansion of local recreation personnel and diversity of local programs stemming from the exchange of information, regional recreation strategic plan, and training for the recreation practitioners;
- **CREE NATION BEARS Bantam CC hockey franchise;**
- Re-establishing relations with the town of Val d'Or regarding C.N.I.T. topic;
- Completion on the designing the proper structure for regional recreation for approval – Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association.

Expansion & Launching of Recreation Programs and Services

- As more Cree communities were expanding their recreation personnel, the recreation departments were set to develop and implement more diversified activities and programs for all ages;
- More time was spent in the local program development without having to contribute more time to the Cree Nation Invitational Tournament that is normally organized by the recreation directors;
- With the expansion of recreation personnel and programs, the leadership of the recreation directors became much more in demand and it required their constant presence in their offices.

Funding for Crees & Recreation Programs & Facilities

- Funding related to MOU agreement and other funding agreements with the governments had helped the Cree bands to increase funding toward their local recreation programs and services;
- At the same time, the local recreation departments were able to secure funding from different funding sources for their departmental activities and programs for the benefit of their community members;
- **Cree communities began to commit themselves millions of dollars to construct facilities will house sports & recreation activities for their communities.**

Overview of Recreation in the New Millennium

- Continuation of the annual hockey & broomball tournament in Val d'Or;
- More coaching development programs in the Cree communities;
- More funding from provincial and federal governments toward community needs, programs and services for the Cree communities as a result from the Cree-Quebec New Relations Agreement;
- Cree communities started to recruit more specialized sports and physical activities and programs for their communities;
- Cree communities continued to build sports & recreation facilities for their community residents.

Accomplishments in Recreation in the New Millennium

- Midget AA Franchise – Eenouch now renamed as Cree Nation Bears;
- James Bay Minor Hockey League;
- Completion on the construction of the Sports and recreation facilities;
- Implementation of more sports and recreation programs for the children, youth, and adults in the Cree communities;
- The creation and incorporation of Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association under the Canada Corporations Act of Industry Canada

Cree Youth Hockey Development Program - Management

- **Cree Nation Bears Midget AA** – Charles J. Hester as General Manager & Steve Cheechoo as head coach;
- **Cree Nation Bears Bantam AA** – John Gosset as Interim General Manager & Charly Wash as head coach;
- **James Minor Hockey League** – Raymond Shanoush as President, Gordon Brien as Vice-President for Inland, Pauline Lameboy as Vice-President for Coastal;
- **Cree Nation Bears Pee-Wee** – Paul Shecapio as General Manager.

Investing Our Financial Resources

- Major portion of the revenues generated from the event have now been invested toward local and regional activities as well as programs (Cree Youth Hockey Development Program, Cree Nation Fitness Challenge..);
- Implementation of C.R.E.E. funding program for the Cree children and youth related to sports, physical health activities or programs;

Challenges in the Cree Nation

- Fight against alcohol & drugs within the Cree Nation;
- Student attendance and student success rate;
- To combat social issues in the communities;
- To develop as well as implement activities and programs to decrease vandalism and other social issues within the communities;
- Fight against Diabetes epidemic and other health issues within the Cree Nation;
- **Allocating funding for programs related to physical health activities, leisure, sports development and recreation programs;**
- Organizational Assessments of Cree entities.

Challenges in Education

- Education reform and organizational assessment;
- Social Issues within the student population at local schools;
- Student attendance and student success rate;
- Upcoming Negotiations for renewed funding agreement on education;
- Enhancing sports development programs within the education system.

Challenges in Cree Youth Hockey Development Program

- To develop & implement operations and fiscal management plan Cree Nation Bears hockey development program and James Bay Minor Hockey League;
- To strengthen hockey program
- To conduct formal needs assessment on AA hockey development programs & JBMHL;
- To develop and initiate training needs in operations & management for the team management personnel and leadership involved in the hockey development program;
- To solicit and secure the required funding related to hockey development programs, administration, and capital costs;
- To provide funding for ongoing coaching and officiating certification training programs;
- To set up proper structures and register by-laws with Corporations Canada for legal status;
- To address needs & issues related to players and develop the essential programs for the players (social, education, discipline..).

Summary of Accomplishments in Cree Recreation

- Increased funding on services and programs in local recreation as a result from recent agreements;
- Construction of proper recreation and sports facilities in the Cree communities;
- Access to better recreation and sports facilities to carry out sports and recreation activities and programs;
- Cree Youth Hockey Development Programs in Cree Nation Bears Hockey (Bantam & Midget AA, James Bay Minor Hockey League).

Summary of Accomplishments in Cree Recreation

- Good management personnel in the JBMHL and Cree Nation Bears Hockey Development Program;
- Development and implementation of innovative sports & recreation programs and activities at the local level;
- Secured funding from URLS for administration of the CRA Regional Recreation office and funding for local summer camps;
- Establishing links with First Peoples' Aboriginal Sports Circle and other Cree entities through joint efforts/committee (external influences).

The Road Ahead in Leisure, Sports and Recreation

- **As the Cree communities have committed themselves to millions dollars to construct sports and recreation facilities, the next challenge for the Cree leaders (both regional & local) is deciding where to classify the programs related to physical health activities, leisure, sports, and recreation;**
- Allocation of funds to sports & recreation programs;
- Allocation of funds toward developing Cree athletes;
- Support joint efforts/committees in order to strengthen working relations toward program development and implementation for the benefit of the Cree Nation.

The Roadmap

- To secure the required funding for regional recreation initiatives has always been a challenge for the recreation directors;
- **Strategic Planning on diversity of programs and activities;**
- **To revive the Cree Traditional Summer Games commonly known as “Pow-Wow”;**
- **Planning of Symposium on Leisure, Sports and Recreation.**
- **Develop global Animation Plan in Leisure, Sports & Recreation in Cree communities;**
- To plan and initiate ongoing training for the recreation program and facility managers in order to have trained recreation personnel in the Cree communities.

The Roadmap

- **Structure for regional recreation “governing board”**
- To create Cree Regional Recreation website;
- To enhance support and increase recognition of the sports and recreation within the political arena;
- To increase support on the Cree Youth Hockey Development Program (JBMHL & Cree Nation Bears AA Franchise);

External Influences – CRA Regional Recreation

- First Peoples Sport & Recreation Circle of the Eastern Door & North;
- Cree Regional Entities (CSB-CHB...)
- Cree Nation Recreation Directors' Committee;
- Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport - Secrétariat au Loisir et au Sport (MELS);
- Unité Régionale de Loisirs et de Sports (URLS);
- Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc. (ORFA);
- Commission Loisir et Sport de la Baie-James (CLSBJ).

Creating the CRA Leisure, Sports & Recreation Department

- This exercise is required for funding purposes, as a result of the recent Canada-Cree agreement and the potential renewing of the sports and recreation funding agreement with URLS of MELS;
- The focal point within the CRA Regional Recreation office is to ensure the creation of the department with its services and programs that will align with its vision and mission;
- The relationship with other key partners or external influences is essential at this point such as Cree School, Cree Health Board, MELS, CRA/GCCEI, Commission Loisir et Sport de la Baie-James.