

# Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

## Traditional fisheries in Smokey Hill: Finding cisco



*Hydlo and Friends is a program broadcast by JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke and Réal, discuss various matters related to Hydro-Québec activities on Eeyou Istchee lands. Swapping their mike for a pen, they invite you to explore various aspects of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project.*

The follow-ups done in 2010 and 2011, since the partial diversion of the Rupert, have demonstrated that there are still cisco stocks in the river. Its behavior is no longer exactly the same, which is a major challenge to the fishermen of Waskaganish, who have to work extra hard to locate the new cisco congregation sites.

### Lessons of 2010

In 2010, close to 7,000 cisco were caught in Smokey Hill. That's not much compared to the 20,000 caught over the past three years, but it's also a sign that the cisco are in fact still returning to the Rupert.

At the end of this first postdiversion fishing season, there was much discussion, and many possible explanations for the yield were suggested: logistical problems, missing the peak of upstream migration, different spatial distribution of fish, cisco being stuck at the first rapids (KP 5), cisco

going straight upstream instead of gathering at the foot of the Smokey Hill rapids as they used to, and so on.



### HQ/SEBJ and community of Waskaganish working together to find solutions

In fall 2010, the members of the HQ-Cree Monitoring Committee decided to set up a joint committee with HQ/SEBJ representatives and community stakeholders, to come up with solutions before the 2011 fishing season.

The members of this new joint committee, named the Smokey Hill Liaison Committee, have met several times in 2011 to draw up an action plan to monitor the movement of cisco in the river and also to make sure that fishermen and processing facilities would be ready by August.

### Traditional knowledge to the rescue

This year, once again, tallymen Clarence Cowboy and Sanders Weistche and their crews have built small pools on the north and south banks of the Rupert at the foot of the Smokey Hill rapids in order to perpetuate traditional dip-net fishing.



*Sanders Weistche's crew built deep-net fishing installations on the south bank of the Rupert.*

Their goal was to create pools similar to those that existed prior to diversion by building small walls with stones and pouches of gravel, with boardwalks above to facilitate scooping.

Results to come! Stay tuned!



*Deep-net fishing installations on the north shore of the Rupert*

### Traditional fisheries in Rupert Bay

At the community's request, HQ/SEBJ funded a traditional fishing program in the bay to monitor the movement of cisco from Pointe Goyau to the mouth of the Rupert. A dozen fishermen from Waskaganish went out in July and August. The end of the fishing season was celebrated with a traditional feast attended by fishermen and HQ/SEBJ representatives.

