



Partial diversion of the Rupert River in just a few weeks.....	2.
Graduation in Chibougamau: Groupe SM training/internship program students receive their college certificates.....	2.
2008 Cree Opinion Survey.....	3.
HQ/SEBJ is counting geese again!.....	3.
Preserving memories of the Rupert River.....	4.
Cree workers invited to document their professional skills.....	4.

Partial diversion of the Rupert River in just a few weeks

A vital step in the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project, which began in January 2007, will be completed in November 2009, when the Rupert will be partially diverted, leaving an average of 30% of the river's flow to continue its route toward Rupert Bay.

The Rupert River will obviously not be the same but its flow will remain significant. In fact, under the *Boumhouan Agreement*, Hydro-Québec made a commitment to maintain sufficient flow to preserve fish communities via an instream flow regime (see page 2). Navigating conditions will also be maintained.

The river will be closely monitored after the diversion. For example, follow-up studies on the spawning of cisco, sturgeon, walleye, whitefish and suckers will be done to assess the effectiveness of the instream flow.

"The Crees will be involved in the process," explained Normand Béchar, Director – Eastmain Projects. "HQ/SEBJ signed an agreement with the Crees in May to create the Rupert Water Management Board by the end of the year." The Board, composed of representatives of HQ/SEBJ, the Cree Regional Authority and the communities of Nemaska and Waskaganish, will be responsible for jointly managing the ecological instream flow with the objective of preserving fish habitat and stocks.

Continued on page 2



2008 Cree Opinion Survey: How the Crees feel about the future of their Nation

Knowledge is power. With the election of a new Grand Chief, here are a few results from the HQ/SEBJ opinion survey conducted in 2008 which could be of interest.

First, some good news: the new Grand Chief will be leading a Nation that is thriving, since 66% of the Crees consider that it is stronger than it was 10 years ago, and confident, since 80% of respondents believe that it will be doing even better in 10 years. Opinions are divided on the factors that have contributed to this increased strength; in fact, respondents consider that it is due to the traditional way of life (8%), the signing of agreements/Paix des Braves (8%), economic development (6%), the unity of the Cree Nation (6%) and government autonomy (6%). On the other hand, there is consensus on the factor that is weakening the Cree Nation: one third of respondents point to drugs and alcohol.

Continued on page 3

Preserving memories of the Rupert River

During the past year, Waska Ressources has completed a project to photograph and film the Rupert River. The project, funded by the Niskamoon Corporation and SEBJ, was conducted from summer 2008 to spring 2009; more than 7,000 photos and almost 50 hours of footage were taken to show future generations what the Rupert River looked like before the partial diversion.

"The objective of the project," explained Jean-Claude Dostie, Project Manager for Waska Ressources, "is to show the Rupert River as it is." Four photo and film sessions were organized to capture the four seasons—in August and October 2008, for summer and fall landscapes, and in March and May 2009, for winter and spring landscapes.

By helicopter and plane, the crew—mainly composed of Ian Diamond, Jean-Claude Dostie and Dominic Laroche—flew over the river filming and photographing areas of particular interest

because of their landscape, or for social and/or archaeological reasons, such as the rapids, the islands upstream of Lake Nemiscau, Smokey Hill, and Old Nemaska.

"We met with the Nemaska and Waskaganish band councils, tallymen and anthropologists," said Mr. Dostie, "so that they could help us identify sites that are valued by the Crees."

Continued on page 4





Partial diversion of the Rupert River in just a few weeks



The instream flow regime: How it works

The way instream flow works is simple. At the time of the diversion, when the two big gates on either side of the spillway are closed, the central gate will be kept open, releasing a flow of 127 m³ of water per second. This gate will then be operated progressively in the spring in order to release 416 m³/s over a period of about six weeks to enable walleye, suckers and sturgeon to spawn. At the end of this period, the flow will be reduced to 127 m³/s again for the rest of the summer. Finally, the same operation will be carried out in the fall for whitefish spawning, when the instream flow will be increased to 267 m³/s for about one month.

When the gate opens will vary from year to year, so as to replicate natural conditions as closely as possible. These conditions will be determined by measuring certain parameters in Mesgouez Lake, which serves as a control site, as it will remain unaffected by the diversion.

Impoundment of the diversion bays

Once the spillway is closed, the Rupert diversion bays will fill progressively over a maximum of one month. In the end, an area of about 346 km² will be flooded. A small portion of the land is already under water following the pre-flooding in July and August 2009.

A last inventory of beaver lodges will be conducted in mid-September with the tallymen of traplines affected by the modified flow conditions. They will have until the closing of the spillway gates to trap out the lodges.

After diversion, and for the time it takes to impound the diversion bays, the tallymen will periodically fly over the flooded areas by helicopter to observe wildlife behaviour and take any action necessary.



Ice conditions

Monitoring of the ice conditions on water bodies affected by the diversion will begin in November 2009. It will be carried out in close cooperation with the tallymen from Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Eastmain and Wemindji. Results of the monitoring will be aired in the communities on the local radio station.



Construction of the weir at KP 33

After diversion

The diversion of the river is a key step in the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project, but not the final one. The remaining work includes the completion of the Eastmain-1-A and Sarcelle powerhouses, which are scheduled for commissioning in 2012, and the construction of the eight hydraulic structures (spurs, weirs and a rock blanket) along the Rupert River from KP 20 to KP 290 to maintain water levels.

The eight hydraulic structures will maintain current water levels over half the Rupert River's length. As its mouth at Waskaganish, the Rupert will maintain 50% of its present flow.



Construction of the weir at KP 110



Graduation in Chibougamau: Groupe SM training/internship program students receive their college certificates

On May 30, 2009, 5 students celebrated the end of the Groupe SM training/internship program at the college in Chibougamau. The program, an SEBJ initiative, was funded by SEBJ and Cree Human Resources Development (CHRD). The 1,260 hours of training, combined with an internship at the Rupert jobsite, enabled them to receive college certificates in Inspection and Quality Control of Road and Municipal Works. Diploma in hand, the students quickly found jobs; they are now working for Consultants Aurus of Chibougamau, Énergie Gérance at Nemiscau workcamp and Laboratoires Qualitas at Rupert workcamp.

In the front row, from left to right, are students Norman Katapatuk, Daniel Rouleau, George Hester, Christopher Matoush and Samuel Bilodeau-Bordeleau, with representatives from CÉGEP de Chibougamau, the CHRD, Groupe SM and HQ/SEBJ.

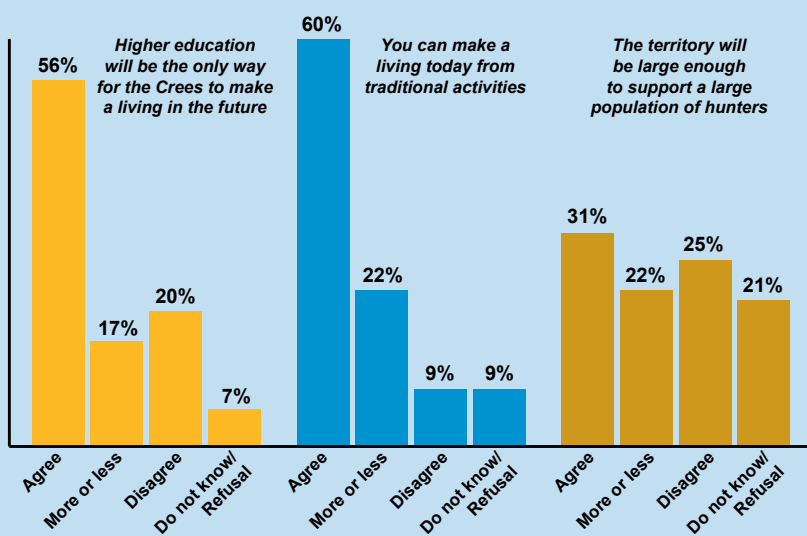
2008 Cree Opinion Survey: How the Crees feel about the future of their Nation

Continued from page 1

With regard to Cree economic development, almost half the respondents identified small business (21%) and wind energy (26%) as primary development priorities. In all cases, hydroelectricity, logging and mining ranked last, which clearly shows that they prefer development based on low consumption of natural resources. Finally, despite the optimism of respondents with regard to the Nation, almost half (45%) considered that young people would have to leave their home communities to find jobs.



Responses to the following statements on the future way of life of the Cree Nation



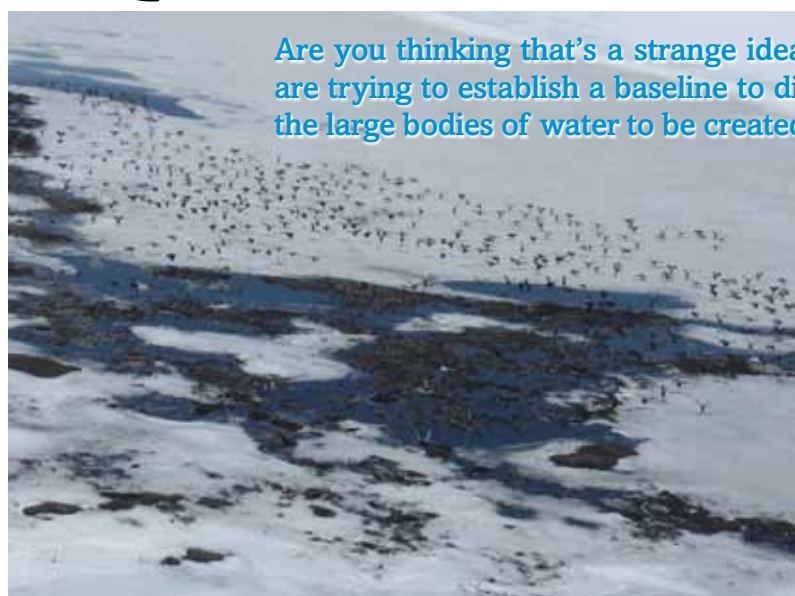
Priorities in Cree Economic Development

Development sector	First priority (% of respondents)	Global rank
Small business development	21	1
Outfitters	10	2
Wind farms	26	3
Marketing of wild meat	12	4
Manufacturing	6	5
Ecotourism	4	6
Hydroelectricity	12	7
Logging	6	8
Mining	3	9

Methodology

In October 2008, HQ/SEBJ carried out an extensive survey of the population of six communities affected by the EM-1-A project (Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi) on various aspects of Cree life, quality of life in the communities, the practice of traditional activities, relations between Crees and HQ/SEBJ and the population's future prospects. The survey polled 332 individuals who constituted a representative sample of the socio-demographic composition (gender, age, occupation, community of residence) of the Cree population.

HQ/SEBJ is counting geese again!



Are you thinking that's a strange idea? What about counting breeding pairs? The objective is quite simple; specialists are trying to establish a baseline to discover whether Canada geese will make more or less use of the diversion bays—the large bodies of water to be created by the partial diversion of the Rupert River—during spring migration.

In the impact assessment, HQ/SEBJ predicted that they would be used more, as was the case for Opinaca reservoir and lakes Boyd and Sakami. As a matter of fact, the field crews who inventoried Opinaca reservoir twice in May 2009 counted 10,529 Canada geese from May 3 to 5 and 62,666 from May 9 to 12. Enough for quite a stew... In comparison, during the same period, only 3,110 and 225 Canada geese were counted in the future Rupert diversion bays. In accordance with the wishes of the tallymen, lakes Boyd and Sakami were excluded from the inventory.

The next Canada goose inventory will be carried out in 2011 to evaluate the use of the Rupert diversion bays during migration. No effort will be spared to make these areas attractive to geese! Many borrow pits used during the construction period will be converted into goose ponds—a mitigation measure that has proven its worth and is appreciated by the tallymen.



Inventory of breeding pairs

A second component of waterfowl monitoring—the inventory of breeding pairs—was carried out from May 18 to 27 in the future Rupert diversion bays and the 21 control plots set up around them, as well as along the Rupert and Broadback rivers, the latter being used as a control. The objective is the same as for Canada geese; namely, to establish a baseline to evaluate the future use of the diversion bays and the reduced-flow section of the Rupert River for breeding by various waterfowl species. HQ/SEBJ expects certain species to benefit and others to be at a disadvantage, depending on their liking for large bodies of water. Overall, however, the changes expected are minor.

Counting breeding pairs, however, is not so easy. For each species, a kind of "dating chart for birds" scientists call an indicated pair conversion table is set up to record the reproductive behaviour of the various groups. The table makes it possible to establish the number of probable pairs based on the birds observed. For example, for Canada geese, seeing one male and two females is equivalent to one pair, while for black ducks, seeing one male and two females counts as three pairs.

Overall, the inventory of breeding pairs revealed that there are 9,137 birds for 2,546 indicated pairs. The individuals belong to 21 different species, the most common being black scoter (1,433). The count in the future Rupert diversion bays (2,879 individuals and 918.5 indicated pairs) was similar to the one in the 21 control plots. On the Rupert River, there were 2,565 individuals and 555.5 indicated pairs.



Joel Poirier and tallyman Ernie Moses of Eastmain conducting an aerial inventory.



Continued from page 4

Preserving memories of the Rupert River

Where can you find the pictures of the Rupert River?

The photos will eventually be available on an Internet site. Meanwhile, some of them can be viewed on the Waska Ressources site at the following address: www.waskaressources.ca. The shooting sessions resulted in four 1½-hour films, which will be archived at Hydro-Québec. Copies of the DVDs will be made available to the communities via their local Monitoring Committee representatives.



The Bear Rapids – KP 49



Oatmeal Rapids – KP 108.5



The Cat Rapids – KP 66



Smokey Hill Rapids – KP 24.5



Gravel Pit – KP 21.5



Old Nemaska



Islands upstream of Lake Nemiscau

Photos : Waska Ressources

Want to contact the jobsite?

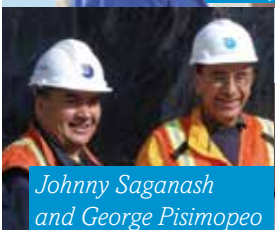
If you have any questions or comments about the work on the Eastmain-1-A/ Sarcelle/Rupert project, please feel free to contact Dominique Clos (819 865-7255), Sydney Loon (819 672-2200, ext. 3610) or Michel Traversy (819 865-7063), or Cree counsellors George Pisimopeo (Rupert workcamp, 819 865-7140), Johnny Saganash (Nemiscau workcamp, 819 865-7669) or Lloyd Mayappo (Sarcelle and Eastmain workcamps, 819 865-7260).



Lloyd Mayappo



Dominique Clos and Sydney Loon



Johnny Saganash and George Pisimopeo



Michel Traversy

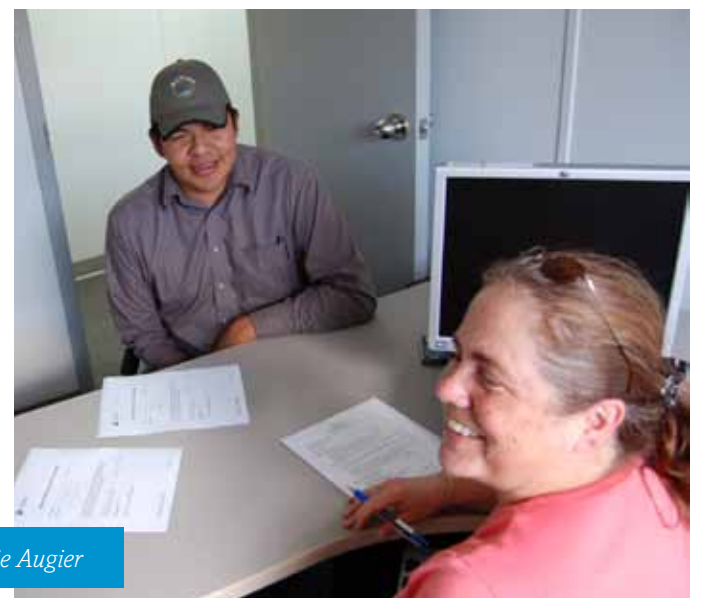
Cree workers invited to document their professional skills

The Cree workers at Nemiscau and Rupert workcamps have access to a new service that allows them to document their professional skills; in fact, about 150 workers have benefited from the services of a professional in putting together their CVs this summer. So far, the service has been even more successful than the project's initiator had hoped!

"I've always been surprised by the number of workers who didn't have a CV or whose CV was not up to date," explained George Pisimopeo, Section Manager – Cree Relations at Rupert workcamp. "Yet, it is an indispensable asset in finding a job, which workers will need once the project is over."

This need gave rise to the project to help Cree workers prepare and/or update their CVs. The project is financed by the Niskamoon Corporation, while the Nemaska Band Council and SEBJ provide accounting and logistics support. The consultant will visit the other workcamps, including Oujeck, Sarcelle and Eastmain, in fall 2009 and may return to Rupert workcamp if requested.

The workers involved leave with a USB thumb drive containing their CV, which they can then easily update. "In the long run," said George, "I would like all Cree workers to take advantage of this service. It will give them a helping hand in documenting the professional skills they acquired at the jobsite and assist them in their search for a future job."



Joshua Loon and consultant Valérie Augier

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