ᐊᓂᐦᐃᔨᐧᐣ ᓄᑎᒋᐊᓂᐦᐃᔨᐧᐣ ᐁ ᓀᑕᒐᑐᑦ (ᐊᓂᔨ ᐊᐢᑎ)
Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

ᐊᓂᔨ ᑎᐯᓄᑎᒪᓂ
Cree Nation Government
Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

Modern Treaties and Reconciliation: The Way Forward

Dr. Abel Bosum
Grand Chief

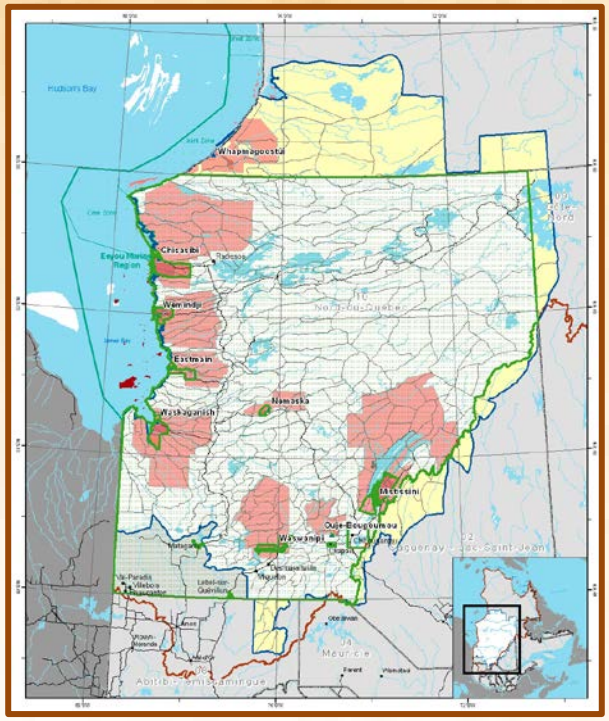
Gatineau, Quebec / Hilton Lac Leamy
November 15, 2017

Choosing the Way Forward

RISING ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES TO ENGAGE IN TRUE INDIGENOUS NATION-BUILDING

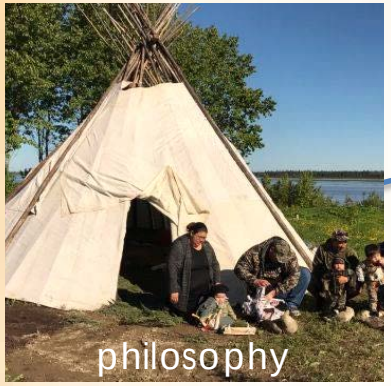
Crees of Eeyou Istchee

James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975)



Our Relationship with the Land

A FUNDAMENTAL CONNECTION THAT DEFINES, SUSTAINS AND GUIDES US



Cree Struggle for Recognition of Rights

IN CONTRADICTION WITH HISTORIC CANADIAN POLICIES AND PRACTICES

~~Natural Resources~~

~~Legal Claim and Title~~

Indian Act

Indian Residential School System

Reserve System Chronic Underfunding

Primary Indigenous Mission

LIKE MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE WORLD, WE STRUGGLED TO PROTECT OUR WAY OF LIFE

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

UNRESTRAINED RESOURCE EXPLOITATION

Forty Years of Cree History…

THE JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT WAS ANNOUNCED IN THE EARLY 1970'S

WITHOUT Cree consent or consultation

1973

Crees go to court

- Injunction granted
- Court order ruled that Quebec and Canada need to negotiate with us

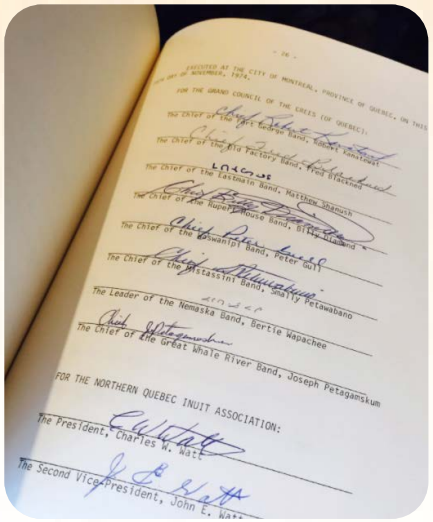
1975

James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)

Cree Rights and the JBNQA

OUR VISIONARY LEADERS SET US ON A PATH OF NATION-BUILDING

- Partnership for future development of the territory
- Self-governance
- Cree control over:
  - Health
  - Social services
  - Education
  - Policing
  - Justice
- Regime for environmental mitigation of development projects
- Protection of traditional Cree way of life
- Support for Cree community and economic development



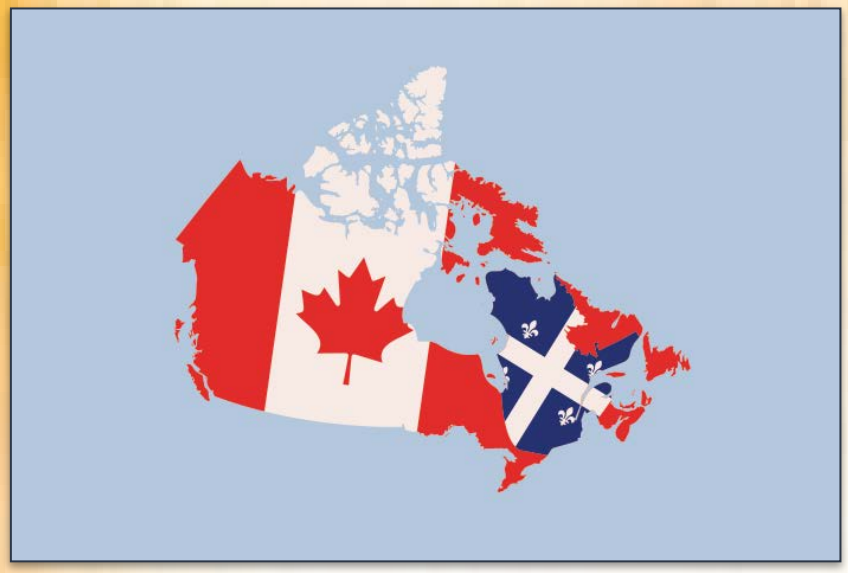
Ongoing Struggle for Implementation

BOTH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS RENEGED ON IMPORTANT PROVISIONS

LEGAL ACTIONS
PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS
ACTIVE OPPOSITION

Fighting for our Right to Self-Determination

IN 1995, QUEBEC HELD A REFERENDUM ON SEPARATION FROM CANADA, INCLUDING OUR TRADITIONAL LANDS



James Bay Crees Referendum

Cree Nation Taken Seriously…

AGREEMENTS AND TANGIBLE MECHANISMS TO EXPRESS NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIP

2002

Paix des Braves

- Economic development
- Cree consent & partnership in resource development
- Annual payment

2008

Federal New Relationship Agreement

- Transfer certain federal responsibilities to Cree Nation Government, along with financial resources

2012

Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement

- Planning & management:
  - o Cree responsibility 70,000 km^2
  - o Regional Gov't responsibility 300,000 km^2

2017

Cree-Canada Governance Agreement

- Cree Constitution
- Cree laws on Category IA lands
- Our own government

Since the signing of the JBNQA in 1975…

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CREE NATION HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO MOVE OUR NATION FORWARD

Struggle:

Recreate original sovereignty in a contemporary context

Incremental progress

Lay foundations to become

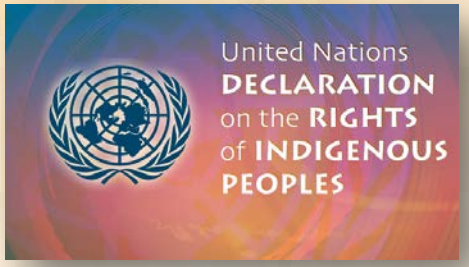
"Masters of our own home"

Our own revolution:

Successful Cree campaign of **DE**colonization

Recognition of Indigenous Rights

REVOLUTION IN TERMS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND THINKING ABOUT OUR RIGHTS

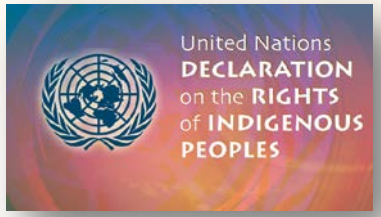


Our **RIGHTS** are always at the center of our struggles

Cree Model: Indigenous/State Relations

PUTTING OUR PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE REALITIES

- Structure new relationships to reconcile:
  - the role of the State +
  - the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 40+ years of international efforts to secure recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Ensure adoption of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Work with Indigenous leaders and groups to urge Canada to adopt a legislative framework for implementation



A New Way Forward

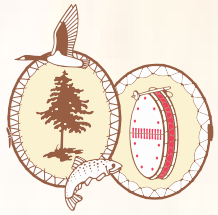
WE NOW HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS

from struggle to progress

redress injustices
overcome fundamental contradictions

your struggle is our struggle

sharing our successes for your success

Meegwetch

Thank you