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Nemestake: An Ehlileweuk Approach to Forest Sustainability

by

Jocelyn Cheechoo

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of
Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Native Studies

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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Nemestake: An Ehlileweuk Approach to Forest Sustainability

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Jocelyn Cheechoo

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of

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Of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

The *Ehlileweuk* (Cree people of the James Bay area) have inhabited and governed their homelands since time immemorial. European settlement of First Nation homelands resulted in the creation of an extractive resource economy that had dire consequences for all First Nations, including the *Ehlileweuk*. Today forest resource extractive industries are encroaching and operating on *Ehlileweuk* homelands, while the bush is still utilized by *Ehlileweuk* families throughout the year for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering and camping. These resilient *Ehlileweuk* land practices promote family unity and continued commitment to learning and practicing customary land values. Forest resource activity prompted community members to get involved and organize a response to deal with industrial interests and extractions on the homelands. Opportunities exist for Moose Cree to operate their own forestry projects, but the issues created by the industry infiltrate the ideas, trust and objectives of a community-based forestry project. It is clear that the water and land are increasingly becoming more important as global sources become scarce and polluted,

more work needs to be done by the *Ehlileweuk* to protect their territories and thus their identities.

Acknowledgements

Gitchi Meegwetch to many, many people for their support throughout the time it has taken to finish this dissertation.

I would like to thank my esteemed advisor, Dr. Peter Kulchyski, for your generous patience, guidance and support throughout my time in the Native Studies department. I would also like to thank Dr. Renate Eigenbrod and Dr. Stephan McLachlan for your support and time with my work and research.

I would like to thank some of my teachers, the people I talked with over tea and various goodies John and Linda, Earl, Stan, Eva, Mishi, Dad, Daisy and Adam. You have helped me grow in so many ways with your time and wisdom. I'd like to thank the Moose Cree Education Authority for their patience and support during my educational efforts.

I would like to thank all of the people I've met that are working to protect Indigenous rights to their territories for their inspiration and encouragement.

Mom and Dad for your support, encouragement and teaching me about my constitutional rights. Dan, thank you for being there from the beginning to the end. My gratitude to all of you is indescribable. Granny and Grandpa for your encouragement (*ehgoodeh noosim!*) and stories during the spring harvests.

Preface

I took several years to complete this work as I struggled with various challenges, specifically being the “researcher” of my own people and community and especially wanting to respectfully present the internal issues facing the Moose Cree. I started doing some research for Moose Cree’s Land Use Plan that is discussed in the Forest Management Issues chapter and realized that not much of the academic research conducted in the region has been done by our own people (except for John Turner’s work¹ with Fikret Berkes in the 1990s). Instead, knowledge highlighted in

¹ See: Berkes, F., George, P., Preston, R., Turner, J., Hughes, A., Cummins, B., & Hughes, A., (1992). Wildlife harvests in the Mushkegowuk region. TASO Report, Second Series, No. 6. Hamilton: McMaster University.

Berkes, F., George, P., Preston, R., & Turner, J., (1992). The Cree view of land and resources: Indigenous ecological knowledge. TASO report, Second Series, No. 8. Hamilton: McMaster University.

Hughes, A., Berkes, F., George, P., Preston, R., Turner, J., Chernishhenko, J. & Cummins, B., (1993). Mapping wildlife harvest areas in the Mushkegowuk region. TASO report, second series, No. 10. Hamilton: McMaster University.

most works from our people was presented anonymously, except for when the project was regarding a specific individual. I want to see that change in my region. I want researchers to cite and reference our experts (with their consent of course!). No courses could have prepared me for the issues I grappled with during the writing of this thesis. The *Ehlileweuk* need to start documenting our peoples' land and cultural knowledge, documented written knowledge is what works in the outside world that is wanting more and more from us: land, water, trees, medicine and access. We, the Ehlileweuk, are in the best position to learn and own this work.

Berkes, F., Hughes, A., George, P.J., Preston, R.J., Cummins, B.D., & Turner, J., (1995). The persistence of Aboriginal land use: Fish and wildlife harvest areas in the Hudson and James Bay lowland, Ontario. Arctic, 48 (1), 81-93.

Nemestake

“Just hold onto your knife, don’t be afraid of your knife,” my mom said as I grabbed onto my knife and the breast of the Canada Goose I was making into a nemestake. The next step in making a nemestake I had not mastered yet, partly because I was afraid of the sharp knife I was using and the skill and precision it required, to make three slices into the goose breast that would open it up into a larger, thinner whole piece. Although I have seen nemestake made as long as I can remember, this is the first time I am attempting to cut the breast piece (I usually leave that for my mom to do).

Nemestake was something my mother wanted to learn from her mother when she started going on the spring harvest with my father, brother and myself. Nemestake is a product derived from many levels of our harvest. For my family it involved coming out to our spring camp on a snow machine or a helicopter with enough stuff to make our two to three week stay comfortable. There is so much preparation and work to do before, during and after the harvest. Most of the preparation work involves getting the camp ready: cutting wood, shoveling, repairing structures and getting stored supplies in the

area. Blind making is also another preparation that happens in the winter with placing objects that would draw snow around it, creating drifts which would be shaped into blinds for hunting.

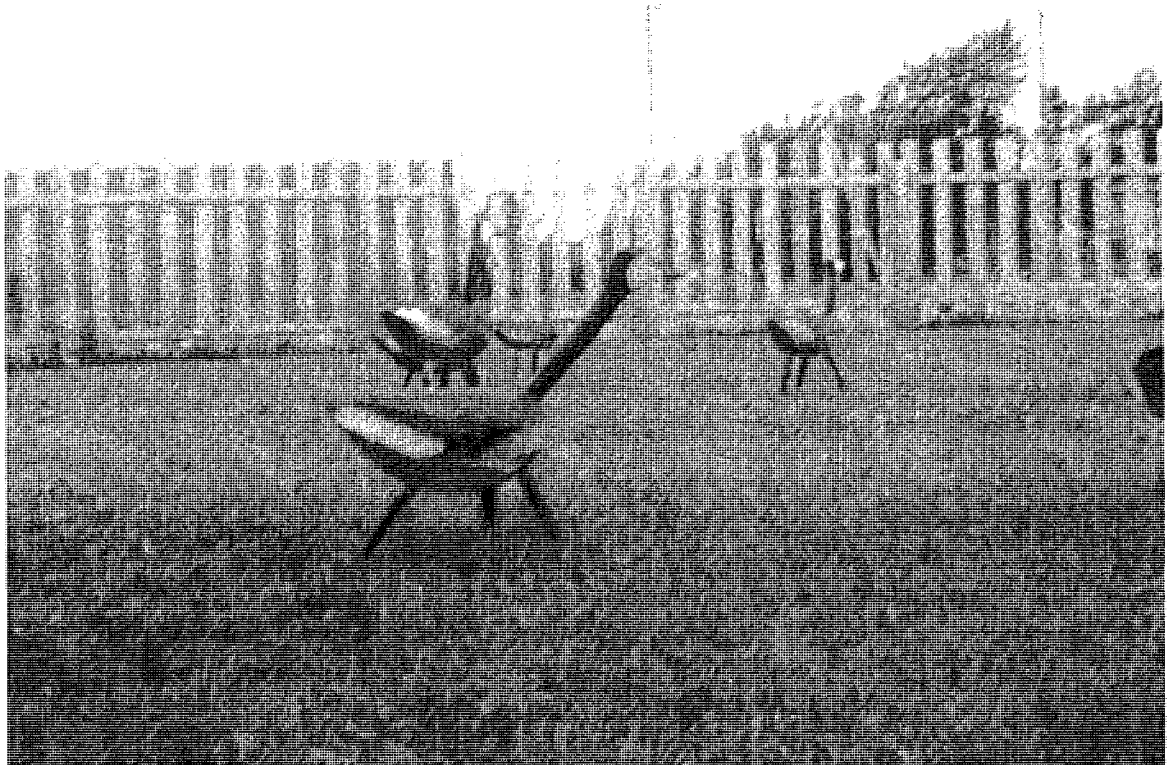


Photograph of a goose hunting blind and decoys

Some of the work during the harvest includes gathering water (snow and creek water), projects for when the geese are not flying, cooking, cleaning, drying clothes, replenishing the wood supply in the tent and teepee and plucking and preparing geese for cooking, nemestake or mikobesighan.

Nemestake are Canada geese that have been smoked for a few days and are considered a delicacy. A specific kind of wood is gathered and used for the smoking process and the smoking process often takes place in a teepee. Once the geese are

plucked and cut up, during the day they hang from racks over a smoldering, smoky fire over a period of a few days. Mikobesighan are not smoked as long and cut up a little differently. There is more work, preparation, patience and skill involved in hunting Canada geese, and although I have some recent experience, I am not an expert, but rather a learner, a student. On the whole, nemestake is part of a larger process that is bigger than plucking, cutting up and smoking a goose. Nemestake is a reflection of the values, relationships, practices, conflict, contemporary issues and future visions of the Moose Cree.



Photograph of a hand-made Canada goose decoy taken in July 2006

Chapter One: Ehlileweuk

*Ehlileweuk*² have existed and sustained themselves in this area of Turtle Island since time immemorial. We had our own society, language, spiritual ceremonies, land management systems and governance. We were a people that were able to support and govern ourselves peacefully.

European fur traders arrived in the late 17th century in the James Bay area to start the fur trade. The arrival of the Hudson Bay Company and western religious institutions during the late 1600s saw *Ehlileweuk* begin to stay in the area for longer periods of time, closer to the trading posts and the churches. As policies emerged and were enforced, from the Government of Canada, the attempted assimilation,

² Ehlileweuk is the Cree term for the people of the land, which later became known as Moose Cree First Nation. This term along with Moose Cree will be used interchangeably throughout this work. There are three main dialects spoken among the James Bay Cree, the L dialect (which is only spoken in Moose Cree), the N dialect which is spoken by the Cree on the west coast (Ellis, 2000, p. x) and the Y dialect north and south eastern Cree dialects which are spoken on the east coast (Aanischaukamikw - Cree Cultural Institute, 2008).

colonization and extermination of all Indigenous Peoples' cultures, ceremonies, languages, practices, rights and beliefs began in efforts to claim the rich land that had sustained the *Ehlileweuk* for many, many generations.

Ehlileweuk never envisioned the surrendering of their territories³ to provinces for industrial development and settlement when they signed Treaty 9. In exchange for signing the Treaty *Ehlileweuk* believed they were going to share the lands and waters of their territories, not surrender their rights. They believed what they were signing would improve their own lives and benefit future *Ehlileweuk* generations. As federal and provincial management systems were imposed the *Ehlileweuk* remained resilient in practicing their inherent right to harvest on their homeland.

On August 5, 1905 the *Ehlileweuk* signed Treaty 9 with the Crown and according to the state the *Ehlileweuk* land base shrank in size, allowing the “opening up” of homelands for development by industry and the province. *Ehlileweuk* were relocated to small areas relative to their harvesting areas, that were called “Indian Reserves” by the Canadian government. The areas that were not Indian Reserves were deemed Crown land and owned by the province, from the Canadian government’s perspective. The province began to implement their own laws and policies on Crown land and industry began to ‘develop’ the territories that *Ehlileweuk* had lived on for many generations. Land was cleared for farming and settlement of

³ Territories, homeland and traditional territory will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation to describe the land base that the *Ehlileweuk* utilize.

European immigrants, trees were cut for building structures and ships, towns were formed that were dependent on extractive industries for survival.

The settlement of the province resulted in the implementation of policies including a trap line system on the *Ehlileweuk* territory. This was the first management scheme that was imposed on the territory that was not of *Ehlileweuk* origin. The *Ehlileweuk* had their management systems (including family based ‘trap line’ systems) intact for generations, prior to European contact. This new system saw the beginnings of the erosion of family based systems where respect was shown and permission sought when other *Ehlileweuk* wanted to harvest in the area. Instead the opportunity for new head trappers of trap lines in this system was created. After the provincial trap line systems, the next step in the provincial management scheme was the implementation of bird sanctuaries that negatively impacted the *Ehlileweuk* seasonal migratory harvesting. These bird sanctuaries were developed without any consultation or *Ehlileweuk* input and the sanctuaries were erected on *Ehlileweuk* prime harvesting areas. One of the more recent management schemes that the province has imposed on the territory are referred to as forest management units where province and industry plan and execute industrial forestry.

It is within this context that the discussion of Forest Management and the *Ehlileweuk* begins. For decades the province has imposed management schemes on the practices and territory of the *Ehlileweuk*. Ontario’s current forest management planning system “consults” with First Nations but they do not pursue consent. By the time “consultation” happens, a large chunk of the plan has already been developed

and will most likely be carried out regardless of the First Nations' position. The process is deemed to fail before it starts and does not meet the needs of the people most impacted by industrial development. Slowly forestry cutting has been encroaching on *Ehllileweuk* territory for a number of years and impacting lives and harvesting of certain families in southern portions of the territory. Some individuals have pursued compensation for the cutting of their harvesting areas.

The Present Study

The purpose of this research is to illustrate that the traditional land use and values of the Moose Cree First Nation should determine sustainable forestry management on their traditional territories. To support the Moose Cree First Nation in proving that their traditional land use and values should determine sustainable forest management the following research areas need to be developed.

- 1) Overview of Aboriginal and treaty rights
- 2) Articulating traditional and continued land use and occupancy
- 3) Identifying Cree views of environmental sustainability and values
- 4) Create a community consultation process for forest planning

The scope of this research will mainly develop the third research area, specifically characterizing the forest, characterizing sustainability and the location of the people within the forest, particularly their rights and responsibilities. This will be achieved through a combination of *Ehllileweuk* methods of inquiry and social science methodologies. My methods for learning about this topic will be mentioned through

the various chapters of this work and not through its own chapter. Excerpts from these interviews will be featured throughout the chapters of this work. Furthermore, these excerpts were mainly left as they were shared. Minor edits were made to the interview transcripts to make it easier to read. I spoke with interview participants on how they wanted their experiences to look and made the edits accordingly. A chapter will be delivered profiling the *Ehlileweuk* community and homeland.

Cree views of environmental sustainability and values will be delivered in the chapters on *Ehlileweuk* values, Contemporary Land Use, Community Management Mechanisms and Forest Management Issues. *Ehlileweuk* values will look at how the *Ehlileweuk* relate to the land, water, animals, birds and fish. Contemporary Land Use will look at how the *Ehlileweuk* relate to the land in the present. Community Management Mechanisms will describe the origins, successes and challenges of community-based groups working to protect their harvesting areas in the homeland. Forest Management Issues will analyze the issues of current forest management and how the *Ehlileweuk* reacted and became involved. The next chapter will provide an overview of the *Ehlileweuk* territory.

Locating myself within this Thesis

I am a proud member of Moose Cree First Nation where I was born and raised on the island of Moose Factory. I am now 28 years old and in the last 10 years have periodically lived in my community; when I am away for school or work I return home for holidays and important events. My time in my community was shaped by the activities my family experienced and encouraged me to try such as hunting,

fishing, gathering, cooking, camping and storytelling. I have worked for my community, Moose Cree First Nation, in various capacities.

I approach this dissertation as a Cree woman. I have practiced my right to hunt, fish and gather on my family's harvesting areas for as long as I can remember. I also come from a family that exercises their harvesting and gathering rights on a seasonal basis, which is more often than I can. I am not a fluent speaker of my Cree language and this has limited what I am able to learn and I do not claim to be an expert in any way related to the land. My perspective also encompasses my academic background in shaping my understanding of the dominant perception and uses of my territory. Within the past years I have been learning how research, community consciousness and resistance and youth empowerment can contribute to keeping the territory thriving and intact for future *Ehlileweuk*. I summarized my approach on learning and working in *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*: "I take my responsibilities to my community and territory as a Cree woman very seriously. I choose to take on a territory guardianship role through a solid cultural foundation based on my Cree traditions and a combination of several other strategy and skills" (Cheechoo, 2008, p. 146). The chapters of this dissertation are a snapshot of a huge photo album of my lifelong learning that will continue after the completion of this work. The opinions and perspectives expressed in italics, along with my narratives, in this work are mine and I take full responsibility for them.

Doing research in my community put me in a unique position of being a “researcher” in the place where I grew up. During this period in my research, analysis and writing, I am both an “insider” and an “outsider”. I was an “outsider” as a university educated young woman in my community, where there are not many young women studying at the university graduate level. Yet working with people that have known me for most of my life, they knew that at sometime I would return to visit my home and family, and in a way this held me accountable to the research and work that I undertook for this degree requirement. Too many times people in our community have worked on projects that they did not see the results, report or dissertation because it was done by an “outsider”. I kept in touch with the people I worked with to let them know the progress on my work and that they would see the results when I was finished.

Completing this thesis kept a part of my responsibility to the academic community. Adhering to the thesis rules and regulations of the Department of Graduate studies by using consent forms, undergoing an ethics review, and a passing a thesis defence ensured my academic responsibility. I felt that my personal ethics were more stringent and difficult to reach than what my community and academic expected. People from my community were supportive about my education goals. This work reflects the final balance I reached between responsibilities to my community, academia and myself.

Chapter Two: Ni-taski-nan

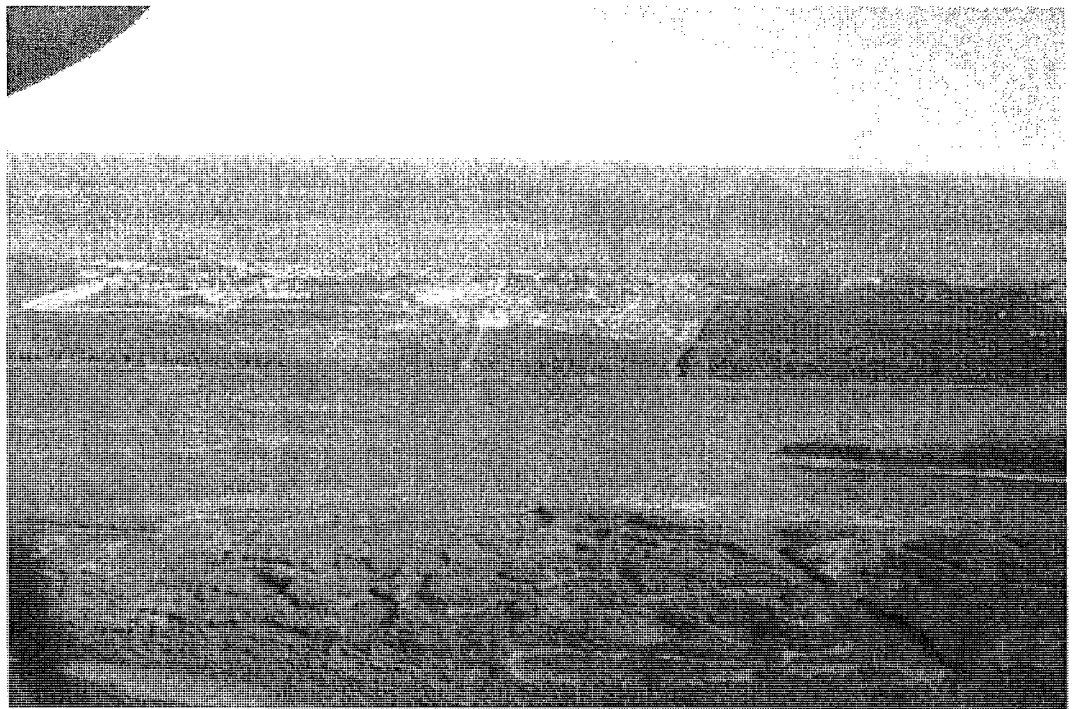
This chapter will offer an overview of my community Moose Factory, Ontario and the area surrounding Moose Factory, *Ehlileweuk* homeland *Nitaskinan*. This will be accomplished through a physical and geographical description, a historical summary, a contemporary glimpse of the community and a political overview. This chapter is meant to be an overview and not an exhaustive background of the area. It is taken from the knowledge of the area I learned growing up there, rather than from scholarly sources.

Moose Factory is on an island that is three miles long and two miles wide, located near the mouth of the Moose River in northeastern Ontario. The island is approximately thirteen miles from the southern tip of James Bay and is one hundred and eighty-six miles north of Cochrane, Ontario.



Figure 1 Map highlighting from bottom to top Toronto, Cochrane and Moose Factory, Ontario.

(Tele Atlas, 2008)



Photograph of Moose Factory and the Moose River taken in July 2006.

Approximately three thousand residents populate the island. The Moose River is a basin of rivers that meet and form the Moose River, and some of the major rivers include the Abitibi River, the Mattagami River, the Missinaibi River, the Kwatabohegan River, the French River and the Groundhog River. All rivers, lakes and creeks throughout the territory flow into James Bay, where in between waterways there is muskeg all across the territory. Several types of trees are found: poplar and black spruce line waterways and tamarack are found in swamps. Other trees found on the land include jack pine, birch and cedar.

The neighbouring community Moosonee is on the mainland and approximately three miles from Moose Factory. Moosonee is the main access point to southern destinations; with an airport and a railway. Moosonee is a municipality and there are no Indian Reserves located in the town; however, the town's location is on Moose Cree territory. For the first time this winter a seasonal ice road linked Moose Factory and Moosonee to the south and the population of Moosonee is approximately three thousand five hundred residents. A winter ice road is used by the First Nation communities north of Moose Factory and Moosonee: Kashechewan, Fort Albany and Attawapiskat. Recently the winter road has been heavily utilized by DeBeers Canada to haul their equipment and supplies to the Victor diamond mine site on Attawapiskat First Nation's territory. This road is also used by all community members for travel to communities situated on the road for tournaments, conferences, meetings, shopping, hunting and trapping.

Historical Profile

The Cree people in the area have sustained themselves since time immemorial, in what is now known as Moose Cree traditional territory. They would travel great distances during seasons for various harvesting activities depending on what animals, birds and fish were abundant in these areas. Many animals, fish and birds would nourish the *Ehlileweuk* including: moose, beaver, muskrat, caribou, rabbit, partridge, geese, ducks, northern pike, pickerel, trout, sturgeon and whitefish. Seasonal travels began to revolve around the Hudson Bay Company's fur trade post once it was set up on Moose River in 1673 where gradually in the summer *Ehlileweuk* would gather to socialize, trade and plan their harvesting activities for the upcoming year. Almost two centuries later, the Anglican Church Mission Society sent a representative to reside in the Moose Factory Mission in 1851 and later set up a residential school. As a result of Hudson Bay and Anglican Church's early settlement in the area, Moose Factory has the "distinguishment" of being the oldest English speaking settlement in the province of Ontario. Many students from both sides of James Bay attended the residential school, Horden Hall. As a result some families relocated to the island from communities on the eastern James Bay coast, when their children were in residential school, and now make their home on an off reserve area of Moose Factory that is known as "tent city" This Cree community is politically represented by MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation

When Treaty 9 was signed in August 1905, a few sections of the island were designated Indian Reserve land, along with an area located south of the community.

Some families were excluded from the treaty and were non-status Indians under the Indian Act. A railway was built from Cochrane to Moosonee and opened in 1932. Construction provided employment for *Ehllileweuk* and non-*Ehllileweuk* and also further opened the southern part of Moose Cree Territory to farmers, prospectors and non-native trappers.

Several changes were also made to the Moose River basin system. Hydroelectric dams were constructed in the Moose River basin in the 1960s without any consultation or prior knowledge to the *Ehllileweuk*. These dams were constructed on the lower Mattagami and Abitibi rivers. In the past, *Ehllileweuk* traveled up the Mattagami throughout the year, right up to the area where the town of Kapuskasing is now located, and this practice began to slow down after the construction of the dams. Over the years as more dams were constructed, the water levels of the Moose River have dropped significantly, impacting mobility and access to some areas during the summer months and greatly impacting the *Ehllileweuk* economy.

Also aiding in some people making Moose Factory home was the opening of the federally funded hospital. Initially it was a health facility that treated tuberculosis for patients from both sides of James Bay and Hudson Bay coasts. With increased settlement on Moose Factory more people began to engage in a wage economy and less on the trapping and hunting economy.

A Contemporary Glance

The division of the island into reserve areas resulted in three governing bodies for the island and some conflict and differences between the residents and families on

the island. The three governing bodies on the island are Moose Cree First Nation (on-reserve), MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation and the Moose Factory Island Local Services Board (off-reserve). The community has a provincially funded elementary school, a federally funded community high school, a federally funded hospital, a tribal council, a complex that holds the post office, the band office, the Northern store, and a health center, a building that houses emergency services and numerous churches. Adding to the complexity, other services and amenities are available in Moosonee on the mainland, government by its own municipal structure though many also Cree people from coastal communities live there.

Although residents of Moose Factory are located in the community for the majority of the year, they are still bound by the seasons and weather of the area. The Moose River is the only way to travel for Moose Factory residents. If we want to leave the island, we can depart by either boat in the summer, helicopter during the river's freezing and breaking up periods, snow mobile and vehicle in the winter. Living on an island, we see the Moose River every day and the river does impact our lives. It costs thirty-five dollars to fly to Moosonee one way during helicopter season. When I started highschool in the mid 1990s (before Moose Factory had a high school) the students from Moose Factory would travel by ferry and school buses during the early fall, winter and late spring and we had to stay in Moosonee during the school week. Now the Moose Factory students that attend highschool in Moosonee fly to school every day and no longer stay in Moosonee during the helicopter season. The

spring river ice break up can be an anxious time for the community. Water levels rise, along with river ice; our community nearly flooded during the 2006 break up.

The contemporary picture of Moose Factory and the region is multi-layered and complicated. Many young people are faced with balancing their lives between the flash and glamour of the technological society with the lifestyle that their grandparents and parents experienced. Young people are urged to pursue an education and to come back to make the community a better place. This educational resurgence is also seeing more people relocating with their families to pursue their educational goals. Yet it is challenging to find employment in the area of your studies.

Political Aspect

In the region, land and resource development issues are politically contentious. The traditional territory of Moose Cree (Fig. 2.) borders and overlaps with the traditional territories of several First Nations including Wahgoshig, Fort Albany, New Post and Waskaganish along with the municipality Moosonee. Moose Cree First Nation undertook interviewing elders on the historical occupancy of their homelands and produced the map in Figure 2. It seems that when resource development becomes an issue, the definition of First Nation traditional territories' boundaries becomes a conflict between First Nations and not a reason for unity. Along with First Nation communities there are also municipalities in the regions as well and these municipalities follow the provincial form of resource management

through the Ministry of Natural Resource; the closest one to Moose Factory is in Moosonee.

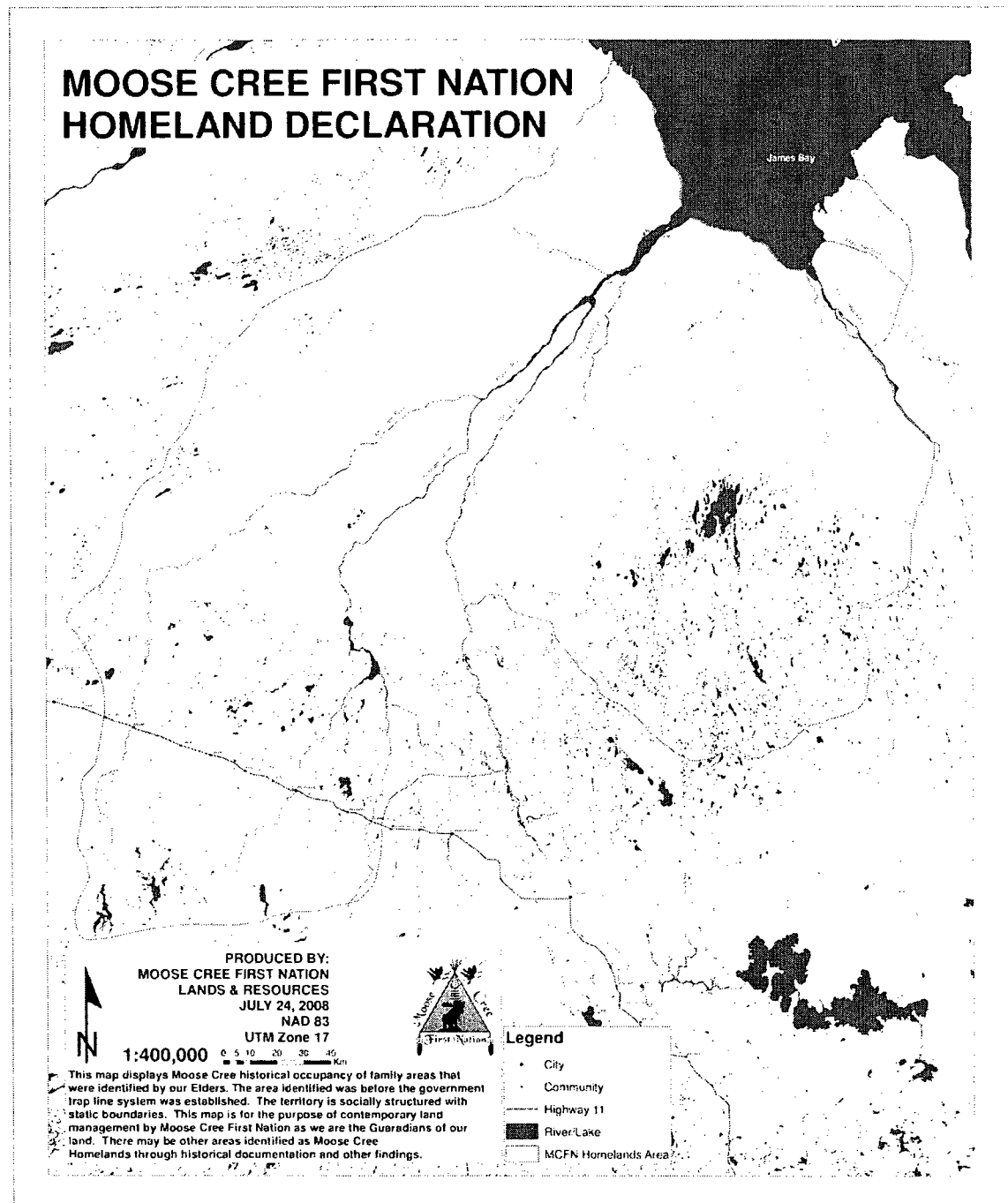


Figure 2 Map of Moose Cree First Nation Homeland Declaration (Moose Cree First Nation Lands & Resources, 2008).

Industrial forestry, mineral development, and now diamond mining are examples of resource development that are happening in the region. These create issues that are facing several First Nations and either leading to negotiations or conflict in the courtroom and in their territories. The provincial mining act does not respect treaty rights of First Nation communities and it greatly needs to be amended. Chief Donnie Morris and several councillors from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and the Aboriginal leader of the Ardoch community Robert Lovelace have recently been incarcerated and released for actively protecting their territory from mining exploration and drilling. Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug territory is a part of Treaty 9 and the court process that this community has endured is being closely watched by all First Nations in the treaty area and across the country. Yet with First Nation leadership going to jail our territories continue to be staked, prospected and possibly drilled for metals. Along with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Moose Cree First Nation is currently working on a community land use plan for the territory that they hope will reflect Moose Cree values.

Even though conflict does arise between all of the political entities in Moose Factory, they do pull together during times of celebration and tragedy. If there is one thing that does unite all of the communities within Moose Factory it is when a tragedy happens in the community or when there is an occasion to celebrate. When

neighbouring First Nation Kashechewan was evacuated in 2005 because of the *e.coli* bacteria found in their drinking water all communities of Moose Factory united to fundraise needed money for the relocated families and the rebuilding of the community with a gala dinner.

This summarizes my brief overview of my home Moose Factory. My home is full of diverse communities and politics. There are many struggles, challenges, goals and dreams here and this work will hopefully capture a snapshot of them.

Chapter Three: Ehlileweuk Values

The purpose of this chapter is to examine *Ehlileweuk* values with the land, and this will be investigated mainly through Cree voices and my narrative. The values of Moose Cree are the foundation of their relationships with the land, water and each other. There are many types of values especially related to the forest industry. The types of values examined in this chapter are not typically associated with industrial logging. They are the values that are not immediately considered during forestry planning: *Ehlileweuk* values. Most of the values discussed in this chapter are not quantifiably measurable; a number cannot be assigned to them. Instead they can be “measured” through the reflection of the state of the family and land. Values are discussed in relation to practices and the way the *Ehlileweuk* try to live. This chapter will be presented in five major sections: the first will look at Indigenous worldviews in relation to connectedness and perspective of the land, trees and all living inhabitants, including people. In the second section respect will be discussed as a concept and in practices of responsibility. The third section looks at knowledge, learning and knowing and specifically the process of learning and teaching

knowledge. In the fourth section awareness and safety are discussed as important behaviours when on the land. Lastly, various attributes on wellness and the role the territory plays in achieving wellness are discussed. We begin with looking at the characteristics of Indigenous worldviews.

Indigenous Worldview

Ultimately resource extractive industries clash with Indigenous communities because of their differing worldviews of the land. The worldviews held of the land and waters by most Indigenous Peoples are similar. These likenesses along with some *Ehllileweuk* worldviews will be discussed in this section. Firstly Gregory Cajete defines a worldview as: “....a set of assumptions and beliefs that form the basis of a people’s comprehension of the world” (2000, p. 62). This segment will look at these assumptions and beliefs. Most Indigenous worldviews, on land and their place within landscapes, are characterized as cyclical and inter-connected as explained by Anishinabkwe Winona Laduke (1992, p. 54):

Two tenets are essential to this concept: cyclical thinking and reciprocal relations and responsibilities to the Earth and Creation. Cyclical thinking, common to most Indigenous or land based cultures and value systems is an understanding that the world – time, and all parts of the natural order including the moon, the tides, women, lives, seasons, or age – flows in cycles. Within this understanding is a clear sense of birth and rebirth, and a knowledge that what one does today will affect one in the future – on the return. A second concept, reciprocal relations, defines the responsibilities and ways of relating between humans and the ecosystem. Simply stated, the “resources” of the economic system, whether wild rice or deer, are recognized as animate, and as such, gifts from the Creator. Within that context, one could not take life without a reciprocal offering, usually tobacco, or some other

recognition of the reliance of the Anishinabeg on the Creator. There must always be this reciprocity. Additionally assumed in the “code of ethics” is an understanding that “you take only what you need and you leave the rest.”

The Anishnabeg characteristics Winona LaDuke describes are also reflected in *Ehlileweuk* worldviews where the cyclical nature of the land can be seen as one enormous extended family where all are related. When a relative is hurt it has a ripple effect throughout the extended family. The cyclical view and reciprocal relations LaDuke highlights are further discussed, in relation to forestry and the inhabitants of these impacted areas and the disruption of cycles, by Earl Cheechoo⁴ in a September 2004 interview:

....it really disrupts their habitat. If they cut a certain area there are animals that existed there for a long, long time. When a forestry company goes in there they will disrupt that population of animals. These animals [will have to] move to another area [and] there is going to be some disruption with the other animals that are there. It goes on, you are forever disrupting animals. It interrupts their cycle.

The land is entrenched with *Ehlileweuk* values and when people talk about values they often illustrate their values thru their experience and practices on the land. The relation between all parts of a landscape work together to provide life as explained in an interview with Lillian Trapper⁵: “The value of trees, the air, the plants on the ground, the soils, the moss and the water all those are of value, to provide life.”

⁴ For the rest of this work cited quotes from Earl Cheechoo were taken from the same interview.

⁵ For the rest of this work cited quotes from Lillian Trapper were taken from the same interview.

The *Ehlileweuk* are part of the land and therefore a part of a huge family of relatives that they depend on for their identity, spirituality and nourishment; they are not different from all other beings that exist on the earth as explained by Adam⁶: “No matter how you look at it, we are the earth and the earth is us. We’re a part of that.”

Connectedness and cycles are a part of most Indigenous worldviews as stated by Leroy Little Bear: “The idea of all things being in constant motion or flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world. If everything is constantly moving and changing, then one has to look at the whole to begin to see patterns” (2000, p. 78). Observations of seasons over many years have been a part of some *Ehlileweuk* experience. The land has roles during seasons as observed in an interview with Eva Rickard-Lazarus⁷:

Nature it does all these things, the trees use a lot of water in the summertime... and its amazing how everything works together. And that’s the power of someone that’s not man’s power...it’s a power of creation...a power greater than ourselves.

When I look at the earth there’s so much life a lot of people don’t realize that. Every season.... knows its duty. It’s not gonna snow in the middle of the summer it has its season...but it does rain in the winter time and I think there’s a purpose for that as well

⁶ Adam is an alias for a person I interviewed that wished to remain anonymous. Adam will be the name that will be used for him throughout the rest of this work.

⁷ For the rest of this work cited quotes from Eva Rickard-Lazarus were taken from the same interview.

Eva mentions the spiritual and powerful aspect of the *Ehlileweuk* experience on the land. Eva also mentions a power that is felt and seen and that is greater than us, and I have also seen and felt this power she describes. There have been times when I have been out on the land and believed and felt that something higher than myself was looking out for my safety during harvests. These experiences have strengthened my relationship with the land and there are more spiritual teachings to strengthen the *Ehlileweuk*. Trees can teach us how to be good people as well. “Trees represent honesty. That’s the meaning of those trees, honesty....” Adam shared, “in the old way I am talking about. From the beginning of time everything had a meaning.” Continuing in the spirituality base of the land, the land is believed to be alive with a spirit that guides all living things, including people, as discussed by Earl Cheechoo: “I have this understanding inside of us, that we have a spirit connected to the land and trees. We don’t know it but we are guided by this spirit. I have come to realize that through personal experience. I wondered what draws us to go out there.”

The forest industry’s values greatly contrast with Earl’s spiritual land perspective. Resource extractive industries view trees and water as “wasted resources” if they are not being cut for lumber or dammed for electricity. In “Voices from White Earth” Winona LaDuke discusses Jerry Mander’s interpretation of the “commodification of the sacred.” “Industrial language has changed things from being animate, alive, and having spirit to being inanimate, mere objects and commodities of society. When things are inanimate, “man” can view them as his God-given right. He can take them, commodify them and manipulate them in society.” (1997, p. 28)

Respect & Responsibility

In this section respect will be characterized in relation to the bush and how this fundamental principle of the land is linked to responsibility. Carrie Dann, a Shoshone rancher and land activist, has this observation on respect, “A real life respects all kinds of life regardless of what it is. In the traditional way of thought everything has a purpose. Everything has a reason to be here. We feel that the Creator put everything here, so that things would be balanced” (1997, p 9). Dann's observation locates the *Ehlileweuk* in relation to the rest of the world and the importance of balance. Respectful practices are characterized in numerous ways such as presentation of self to the land and actions on the land, taking only what you need, keeping your community, harvesting and camp areas clean and even cleaning up other areas. I was taught that if you are going to do something to do it to the best of your ability and this shows respect for yourself and other beings in the area. In an interview, John Turner⁸ shared a similar way of showing respect to the land:

What they used to do long time ago when they would go in the bush in the fall for the winter, they used to try to have something new to wear. Especially moccasins. You're supposed to have a brand new pair and that has to do with how you present yourself to those animals and everything out there. it's like you present yourself as a respectful person I guess that you're [good] enough.

⁸ I interviewed John and Linda Turner together and for the rest of this work cited quotes from John and Linda were taken from the same interview.

This concept and practice of respect is further discussed with an example shared by John Turner in an interview about self presentation to the land and animals from an *Eeyou*⁹ community:

Everyone was getting ready to leave in the fall to go to their camps and this one old man wasn't doing anything. I think he had lost his wife and he was drinking all the time. People were worried about him because it was time to go and he wasn't getting ready to go, he was just hanging around and drinking all the time. So one of them told his son, 'That we're worried about your dad. He's not getting ready to go in the bush.' His son went and bought him some new clothes and gave them to him. And then the old man said 'Oh, I'm good now. I can go'. That's all he needed. 'Now I have some new clothes to wear when I go out in the bush.' He sobered up, packed up his stuff and left. Cause that's how he... yeah that's what he believed. Hmm...so that shows you how they have that kind of relationship with the land.

Another idea that is expressed on respecting the land and harvesting practices is shared by Earl Cheechoo: "...they should respect what's there and use what you know they need. Only take what they need." Winona LaDuke also elaborates on this idea when discussing "*Minobimaatisiwin*" (the good life): "Implicit in the concept of *Minobimaatisiwin* is a continuous inhabitation of place, an intimate understanding of the relationship between humans and the ecosystem, and the need to maintain that balance" (1994, p. 128). As *Ehlileweuk* it is our responsibility to our territory and future *Ehlileweuk* to not disrupt this balance that LaDuke mentions.

⁹ Eeyou is the Eastern Cree dialect term used for the people of the land. This dialect is mostly spoken on the eastern side of James Bay.

The *Ehlileweuk* believe they are responsible for present and future generations and there are various interpretations of this responsibility and degrees of responsibility. Responsible practices vary from individual to individual and these practices and ideals have changed over the years. In a contemporary sense, responsibility can be discussed in two approaches: as a belief and in practices. On thinking responsibly Linda Turner shared the following: “Being responsible is caring about what’s out there, taking care of it and to keep doing that. Using your common sense and thinking when you do something.” Furthermore there is a spiritual link to responsible practices that is explained by Earl Cheechoo:

I know people that can go out there and get what they need. I see them pray. I see them acknowledge spirits. Its prayer and it’s really good. They really appreciate where they are at that time. And they recognize that beauty and peace. Where some will really bitch and its like they are uncomfortable or scared. Or other things interfere when they are in the bush and through their behaviour they will slam things.

Earl sheds light on some people that are lacking a spiritual link to appreciating the beauty and strength of the land. This missing link can result from many causes, one being the loss of connection to the land and *Ehlileweuk* practices through the colonization of Turtle Island. For some people behaving responsibly in the bush is extremely important to them, while some people have lost the meaning and practice of responsible behaviour in the bush. However, in the past couple of decades the values that were eroded over centuries of colonization and assimilation are being revived and reclaimed and this resurgence is partly based on people who never completely lost the connection:

There were always people that did that [practice responsibility] but there was a bunch of people that got lost along the way, [they] littered and had no respect. You know 'Oh, I killed eight moose this winter' and those kinds of things? They didn't stay with the teachings. Now there's a new wave of people coming through and all those teachings are being reconsidered and revived. They are talking about responsibility and we're actually starting to look beyond this influence and changes that were done through colonization, assimilation.

With the *Ehlileweuk* settlement near the Hudson Bay Company trading post, *Ehlileweuk* presence on their homeland diminished. The decrease in *Ehlileweuk* use of their land, and trapping encroachment from outsiders, resulted in the erosion of their family land management systems and along with the respect of asking permission of the family to harvest in a specific area. Today, families still hunt in certain areas at different times of the year; however, that respect has eroded, where if an individual wanted to harvest in that area they would not ask the family that mainly harvests in that area for permission. John Turner discusses the loss and characteristics of *Ehlileweuk* land management systems:

....they used to be really strict on what you could do. Certain things you were allowed and not allowed to do in other people's areas. If people have a hunting ground they would almost treat it like a garden. They would manage it. Especially with trapping like they just trap in one area for one year then they would just leave that area alone completely for about three years. They don't go back there. They use another area, then another area and they do that on a rotation. So they know everything about the entire area. And they can even tell especially when it comes to beaver, how many there are and how many you can expect to find in that area. He even knows how many he left behind and if he goes trapping there again next year how many there will be if he waits another year how many there'll be. And if he waits another year how many there will be. They even know how many

young they might have [and] all that. Everybody was expected to respect that. They managed their areas like that. I suppose the same kind of thinking was applied to trees like a long time ago. That's why they moved around. They camped in one place for a while only. Then they would use up all the dry wood around there. And then they would go to another place.

Taking back that responsibility is occurring for those who have lost it or never knew it. Though this loss is a result of many reasons, the disconnection from the land and living on the Indian reserve is the main cause. Earl Cheechoo discusses the role *Ehlileweuk* have in this resurgence:

We can remain responsible by working together, growing together, learning from each other. People will, depending if they live out there year round, learn how to be responsible. When you live on this reserve it affects you, it disconnects you from the land and when you go out there you relearn, it takes a while but you learn to be responsible. I guess its part of the process and it's forever churning this cycle and that's how we can remain responsible by helping each other learn.

With the resurgence of *Ehlileweuk* practices, people have been adapting them to their time out on the land with their families and teaching their children as explained by John and Linda Turner:

Linda – well the way we use trees has changed too and how we do things. Like now when we do stuff we use that tobacco too. We're gonna use it for something... 'cause we're taking the life of that tree and we never used to do that

John – mm hmm that's what we learned

Linda – and we learned from other people and that's something that's different now. That we do... use that tobacco

John – that’s something that we learnt, that’s how the land was kept.

John goes on further to contrast the values of an industrial European society and the Indigenous society of North America and how Indigenous Peoples have shown thanks and appreciation of their homelands.

If you look at centuries, thousands of years people lived here and there was never any big impact on the land. They’re using tobacco all the time. Everybody did that for everything they took. They put something for it. So when Europeans discovered North America they called it the new world because it was new. How was it new? Because they [Indigenous Peoples] knew how to keep it new and that’s why we do that. They called Europe the old country. North America they called the new world, but they are the same age. (laughs) how can one be old and one be new? It was because they exhausted all the land in Europe. They used it up. They could hardly farm over there when they came here...this was still the garden of Eden. It was still the same way it always was ‘cause the people living here knew how to keep it new.

Showing appreciation is something that is not seen from the forest industry and as the forest has been exhausted in the south of the province. The industry has been moving up north to the southern areas of our homeland to continue the European industrial practice of turning something ‘new’ into something that is ‘old’ and exhausted.

During the *Teme-Augama Anishnabai* blockades to protect their homelands from rapid clear-cutting, Chief Gary Potts along with some community members and provincial representatives defined forest stewardship: “....the forest belongs to the life that lives within it and that the future generations of this life are dependent upon the

continuity of the forest. Human beings must respect forest life and integrate human uses of the forest in a manner compatible with the continuity of forest life. Forever” (1989, p.208). This definition rings true for the *Ehlileweuk* and the fact that our future depends on living this forest stewardship definition on our territories. At one time or another most *Ehlileweuk* view themselves as stewards or caretakers of the land, and these stewardship roles were exercised politically, spiritually and practically.

There is a teaching passed down from our ancestors that crystallizes our sense of responsibility and our relationship to the earth that arises out of the original law. It is said that we are placed on the earth (our Mother) to be the caretakers of all that is here. We are instructed to deal with the plants, animals, minerals, human beings and all life, as if they were a part of ourselves. Because we are a part of Creations, we cannot differentiate or separate ourselves from the rest of the earth (Clarkson et al, Morrissette, & Regallet, 1992, p.4).

Stewardship is something that has been taken seriously among the *Ehlileweuk* when they learn of a corporation’s plan to further exploit the resources on our homeland and to disrupt the balance of the territory. In an interview Stan Louttit¹⁰ offers an *Ehlileweuk* perspective on the steward role of our homeland: “our future role is to be custodians of the land and the forest. Not only the land but everything else that it has to offer: trees, rivers, and wildlife. We always have to be mindful that we’re the ones using it. We have to conserve it, be careful and look after things.”

¹⁰ For the rest of this work cited quotes from Stan Louttit were taken from the same interview.

John and Linda Turner identified aspects of their relationship with the land that include responsibility and stewardship.

John – that’s what you are really talking about a lot of this stuff here, you’re talking about culture. The relationship we have with the land. The responsibility we have...stewardship.

Linda – yeah ‘cause everything that’s out there was given to us from the Creator. Everything that we need to live out there he put out there for us.

In a contemporary sense, stewardship was also something that in an interview Doug Cheechoo¹¹ related to during his time with the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters and Lands and Resources Secretariat (which will be further discussed in later chapters): “I wasn’t so much interested in resource development, more like protection of our environment: the animals that are out there, the fish. That was my main focus.” From the *Ehlileweuk* thoughts on stewardship, it is apparent that this approach to the land is alive.

Littering is a contemporary issue in the territory that indicates disrespect to the earth. In the past decade people’s attitudes and practices have changed in becoming stronger stewards. Some people have started to bring their garbage back and even cleaned up areas where garbage was left behind. People are taking responsibility to

¹¹ For the rest of this work cited quotes from Doug Cheechoo were taken from the same interview.

improve the health of the territory by cleaning up and properly disposing garbage.

This was taught at a young age for elder Daisy Turner¹². She shared in an interview:

“I was taught to keep the place clean, if you make a mess you have to clean up before you go home... and if we were by the river... we didn’t throw any dirty water that we used to wash our hands and dishes in ‘cause it would pollute the water.” Within the community a shift in littering is occurring where people are being careful not to litter their community which is elaborated on by Linda and John Turner.

John – we bring our garbage back. That’s what we teach our kids. Even things like candy wrappers and stuff like that.

Linda – even like that around here even. Teaching these guys, since they were small, about not throwing garbage around. Caleb comes home if he’s out playing around and buys something. When I do the laundry there’s lots of garbage in his pockets and that’s good... that he knows that. That’s one thing that I’m glad we were teaching them and it all comes down to how they are in the bush. We clean up our garbage and even if we go to another place where other people camp in the summer and if there’s garbage we’ll try to bring some of it back.

John – there’s more people doing that now

Knowledge, Learning and Knowing

“Knowledge... is alive, has spirit, and dwells in specific places. Traditional knowledge comes about through watching and listening, not in the passive way that schools demand, but through direct experience of songs and ceremonies, through

¹² For the rest of this work cited quotes from Daisy Turner were taken from the same interview.

the activities of hunting and daily life, from trees and animals, and in dreams and visions.” (Peat, 1994, p.65).

As David Peat sheds light on the living process of knowledge, I elaborate on my experience with living knowledge of the goose hunt. I have been learning how to hunt Canada geese for years, by observing the hunting practices of my father, grandpa, cousins, uncles and aunties. Learning to hunt continues throughout my adulthood and will continue as long as I am a part of the goose hunt. I was not aware of the complexity of the hunt until I thought about how long I have been learning about some components of the hunt: goose calling, decoy position, decoy and blind making, wind direction and of course when to shoot at the geese. This learning and knowing is very specific to a geographic location and time of the year. I have had various teachers including my granny who taught me various goose calls. The most memorable learning that stayed with me was being out in the blind and participating in the hunt; it did not come from stories or from reading about it. My knowledge on the goose hunt is invaluable.

Over the years I have met many, many people who are very curious about my home and our harvesting. They ask questions about how we hunt, and I find it very challenging trying to teach what we do in an area away from my family’s harvesting area. My inability to effectively teach what I know can perhaps be explained by David Peat: “The knowledge is acquired through experience and relationship with the thing to be known. In both cases the knowledge is not so much stored as data in the brain but is absorbed into the whole person.” (1994, p. 66). Maybe the only way for my curious acquaintances to learn about the goose hunt was to experience it. This

section will entail the journey of knowledge and how it is built through learning and then knowing how to share it. Whenever possible this value will be illustrated with *Ehlileweuk* experience in the forest.

There are always new things to learn and new ways to do things. Learning is a living process and can take place in many locations, times and with various teachers. Most of the time family members are our primary teachers throughout our life learning. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles seem to play the vital roles in teaching people who are learning. Going back to *nemestake*, Earl Cheechoo learned from his uncle Matthew about the roles trees had in this process:

I remember uncle Matthew, I took him out springtime and I didn't really notice when I was younger but I did have a chance to go hunting with him. I didn't pick up what he was using and he would be cutting these trees.... certain woods, smoke woods and this is what he taught me. So, I took him out and this is what he wanted to cut. Let's go get *nemestake* wood I told him. I remember him [Matthew] saying that and those willows [is what Matthew used] and this is what I have been using since.

Lillian Trapper learned from her father that harvesting trees can be a long-term process that requires observation and thoroughly knowing the area you are harvesting:

I was taught at camp the way my dad harvests trees, either for firewood, or building things and he would go around the bush. He wouldn't just you know "oh there's a tree" cut it down and burn it. They'd find certain trees for certain types of firewood like drywood, green wood or certain trees for building things. It's not just cut down a tree wherever it is. He goes around check out the whole area to see what kind of trees there are and he selects them. They are selected over

time, over seasons sometimes... Not as soon as your first patch of dry wood and just go and cut it down. You always keep it in mind, “oh there are good tent poles over here. Or there’s a big poplar over here there should be a beaver dam close by here”, all that kind of stuff. That’s what I’ve learnt.

For most of her life, my grandmother has been making moccasins, mitts, hats, gloves and slippers from moose and caribou hide that she has prepared and tanned. Her children and grandchildren have been around her home during various stages of the hide preparation and some of them have helped her with some of the steps in producing tanned moose hide. Linda Turner has taken a large interest in learning how to prepare hides with her mother and through Linda’s learning she knows the type of tree to use and the stage of trees’ life cycle: “...those ones, you can use them even when they’re wet, you can get it when it’s wet and just dry it. And they use that wood too when its really powdery; they used to use it for babies like a talcum powder....”. Linda has been working on hides and sewing clothing for years. Her learning really began at a young age when she would watch her mother working with moose hide.

Young people learn about the use of trees mainly when they are out on the land, even in the preparation of a camp. Being at camp is one of the best ways for young people to learn about trees and the trees’ many roles in a camp as explained by Daisy Turner:

They always have to get brush and floor there we use grass sometimes for the floor, and get stones and rocks keeping the tent from you know blowing up. We also taught them how to shoot and all that... for food and showed them how it’s done, how the plucking the preserving, getting wood for cooking and that, goose, *sagabaun*, making *nemestake* have to have certain wood for making *nemestakes* too. Everybody was

happy they had something to do you know. They didn't have time to get into mischief really (laughs)... they were all anxious to help and after they were finished they would go out hunting... when we were at camp in north bluff when I was a kid we did all this work too, that's where we were taught... weasel traps and then I was taught to skin them and stretch them.

Once an *Ehlilew* feels comfortable with what they have been learning, they may be in a role to share it with interested people and continue the learning cycle for other people. As stated earlier, learning is a lifelong process and often one feels comfortable with one's knowledge as "knowledge as a process transforms and brings with it obligations and responsibilities" (Peat, 1994, p. 66). Lillian Trapper stresses the importance of having strong teachers to learn from:

We can remain responsible if we have the right teachers in the right places and when I talk about teachers those are the people that are able to tell you, the way how things should be done, the way it was done. The way it was done was probably the best way it was ever done because there was no evidence before the white man came that we destroyed things.

The knowledge process of learning by watching and then doing, often has an evaluation aspect where the 'teacher' watches the 'student' as explained by Linda Turner: "mmm hmmm and when you go with other people in the bush, like ones that are experienced like older people. They really show you how to be there like when you are there. When you are gonna go out or whatever they always watch and they will tell you too." They tell you what they observed you doing and how you can do it better or easier. Linda goes on further to share her experience of going out on the land as a new mother and to care for her children while out in the bush:

We decided to go with Eddie and Caroline because I didn't really know how to be out there. I needed to learn from someone. He already started learning from other people. So I needed to learn from someone too. We learned lots in that first year. And then we felt more confident to go somewhere by ourselves and we did.

I had a job and we just decided we were going to go because it was something I wanted to do and learn. When we had William we went back with Caroline and Eddie 'cause he was a baby and she showed me stuff like the moss which ones to use and all that kind of stuff for him. I felt better to be around another family when we had a small baby. Then after that we went on our own. We just kept taking William in the bush until he started school. After that we always went with maybe one of his nephews would come with us so John could have a partner to go hunting with and to help us.

During John and Linda's time with Eddy and Caroline they also learned how to help someone learn about the bush, and in this case specifically trees.

John – He'd know where there was one. And they always watch too eh. When they are in the bush like walking around or doing anything. They'd look at the trees all the time and they'll see one that is good for making something like to make snowshoes or to make something

Linda – or even those hoops, those beaver hoops

John – yeah, somebody has to teach you yeah

Linda – mm hmm different people along the way, eh?

John – yeah. Eddie used to test us. Whenever we were walking around in the bush. He'd talk lots, "there's a tree over there good for snowshoes, did you see it?" he would say just to see if you were noticing things.

The observation expectations Eddie had for his "students," John and Linda, were high when they were walking through the bush. Eddie also taught John and

Linda the importance of high standards when anything was made or done as told by John in an interview: “When they taught us how to do something... they told us try to do it good. Make it look nice and it will work good and your hunting will go good. You don’t do it any old way. It has to do with how you present yourself to the land.”

The opportunities to learn from ‘teachers’ when out on the land is enormous and there are more interactions between elders. Elder Daisy Turner describes the interactions she had with elders during her youth: “we used to visit old people too when we were young... We used to go, three or four of us would go around together all the time, and we’d visit the old people because they would tell us stories and they give us snacks once and a while.” Today it seems that there is a shift in how young people interact with elders in the community and that there are not much opportunities for that interaction to occur. Young people rarely go to elders’ homes to visit, if elders and youth get together it is usually arranged through a school or community event.

Awareness

One of the first lessons I learned when I would go out hunting with my family was to be quiet and listen and that it took a vast amount of patience to hear or see anything. I remember being restless and impatient when my father took me hunting in my younger years. During those afternoons and mornings I had to be quiet and this was sometimes challenging when my brother was there as we sometimes would argue and fight. Lillian Trapper describes how she and her family act in the bush:

...quiet. (laughs) quiet always... you always have to look, learn and listen, all the time... Even when my children are noisy, my dad's like 'tell them not to yell around like that'. It makes you more aware of what's going on. My dad doesn't like that the boys are always on the video game at home. I don't bring those. Clarence let Noah bring one that spring hunt. Its time for my parents to take their family back to the time of their upbringing .

And we have to do things, certain ways... cause that's the way we were taught... I guess it re-roots you when you're gone for a while. It's a good feeling to be there. And it's a good feeling when I see my children doing things like I see Jonah helps my dad. He's the one that is always hunting with my father.

So that's how we try to behave, we need to be alert and watch what my parents do all the time. And we try to think ahead like 'oh we better get more wood.'

Safety

When traveling in harvesting areas safety is a high priority in ensuring that your family and friends arrive safely to your destination. Traveling decisions are made on observing the weather, winds and tides and also by respecting the perils of the land and waterways and knowing when to cease traveling and resuming when the weather is more suitable for travelling. John Turner and Linda Turner talked about the respectful behaviour when traveling across various terrains and landscapes.

Linda – ...You got to respect what's out there, the weather the conditions. Because all those things take care of you when you're there. And what were you saying about...

John – you become part of that landscape. Like even how you walk and where you walk. I remember them telling me if you are along the edge of the bush you walk close to the edge. Close as you can just in case there is something there like a moose. It might see you coming so you always try to blend

in. Then you have to know where its safe, ice conditions and that kind of stuff. How to travel safely or how to conduct yourself safely so you don't get hurt. That's like a respect too, you respect that there's dangers out there that you have to be aware of, what can happen if you don't, like its very different from the way white people see nature where they're like man against nature and try to conquer it. That's not the way we were taught to behave when you are in the bush. Like rapids you don't shoot them. If you come to rapids when you are paddling you have to stop and walk all the way down to the bottom and see if its okay to shoot it and if you don't feel that its okay you have to take your canoe down and walk it along the shore. A line take your canoe down where it's not right to like, just go down and be real proud of yourself because you made it. That's not the right way to respect the rapids.

Linda and John go on further to describe the safe practices of being out on land. Trees and plants can help by keeping you safe and well when you are living in the bush.

Linda – we were just talking like when we go out in the bush like when we first go out. Especially if you are going to be living out there for some length of time, we talked about being safe out there. Safe practices in what you do because when you're out there it's isolated. And... what was that I said again? People, like a long time ago knew all the things, the different trees and how they could use them for medicine if something did happen. They knew how to take care of whatever...if they got hurt but its different now for us. We don't really know a lot of that.

John – yeah being safe and if something did happen you could use the trees to...to help yourself. That's another way the trees help you that's what you said

Linda – they help you

Wellness

The last section of this chapter looks at a few tenets of wellness that are viewed as priorities in Cree lifestyles. Most of the time when people come back from being out in the bush they look rejuvenated, energized and happy. They feel well. Often wellness is discussed when being out on the land through healing, beauty, relaxation and identity. Healing will be discussed first. The history and identity of the *Ehlileweuk* has been heavily impacted by the colonial institutions, especially the Hudson Bay Company and the Anglican Church, and this still reverberates with community members today. Healing has been actively discussed in recent years but prior to these conversations *Ehlileweuk* have been going on the land to strengthen and maintain their well-being.

In my community, programs have run where troubled youth would go on the land with *Ehlileweuk* and learn how to live on the land and the impacts these programs had on young people were impressive. In Ronald Niezen's book "Defending the Land Sovereignty and Forest Life in James Bay Cree Society" (1998, p. 109-110) *Eeyou* elder Robbie Matthews Sr. shares a story about a youth with mental problems:

Last year the doctor told me, "We have a problem with a youth at the hospital."

I never really knew what happened to this gentleman. He was married, had several children... They had to take him to the hospital in Montreal, put him in an institution, hold him up there. But he didn't like that... I guess he had to get out. So the police caught up with him and really locked him up for escaping. They had to bind him when they sent him there,

bind him so he couldn't move his legs and arms... They had a lot of drugs [they gave him]: needles, pills, all kinds of drugs....

"Well," I said to [the doctor], "How many years have you been dealing with this young man?"

"Two, three years," he said.

I said to him, "If he had medication it's not working right for him. Maybe he needs some other kind of medication."

What I meant was, there is a lot of medication being out on the land. Maybe he required some kind of medication being out there.... Finally we decided that we would have another round, see what really happens after we take off some of the medication... and when the next [meeting] came around, I told them, "If I'm right, we should put this young man into the bush. Take him off the medication. Give him a new start. And he could also see all the other camps, other camps on the highway. Maybe he could stay one day with friends or relatives. Take him out. Maybe he will have a different outlook, a different feeling altogether. Because you're kept him in the hospital for too many months of the year...."

Anyway, this is what they did with this student. The hospital chartered a plane, took that guy to his family to take him out on the land. He was there for two months.... The next time I saw him was at the commercial center.... I said to him, "How was your trip?"

And he said, "It was very good. It was good for me, because I'm healed."

So that's what this healing process is about.

Throughout Earl Cheechoo's youth and adult years, he has been going to the land to learn about himself and to also heal himself.

I can compare my younger years when I didn't really know how to behave to now. It's different, like a while back I

could consider myself careless. Now I am more comfortable in the bush, meaning I show more respect to what's there. I feel its very important part of our cycle of life like what's out there the trees, the animals. It's a type of healing process that I am going through. Spiritually mentally emotionally, it has something to do with that. Its ongoing I'm learning about the cycle of life [of] the Cree people.

Eva Rickard-Lazarus further explains how the land keeps her well. "You just feel so good when you're out there...I went to Big Stone for a couple of nights. I just feel so refreshed. I wish I could have stayed longer but people had to come back. It was nice to sit outside, walk around, cook, and share meals with people." The healing powers the land has on *Ehlileweuk* is enormous and huge. Often for some people it is the only remedy for their ailments.

In the spring of 2005 a very close friend of mine passed away from cancer. At the time it was when we would have been preparing for the Canada goose harvest around the camp. Our camp preparation started a little late that spring and I was hesitant on going hunting. I ended up leaving for my camp the day after my friend's wake. In hindsight, being out on the land and being an active harvester was what I needed to grieve and heal at that difficult time in my life.

Relaxation is something that many people feel when they go out on the land. Leaving the stresses of work and community issues allows opportunity for a person and their family to relax. Daisy Turner says that activities on the land can be relaxing: "...well we just live and go for a walk or relax. We'd go in the bush sometimes or by the river there and fish." Relaxing can take on many forms including harvesting a meal as Eva Rickard-Lazarus states, "I relax. Well there's

things I like to do. It's fall now and I would put out a net. I'd set a net...Catch some fish just to eat at the time I am there. Not to stock up many." However most can agree with what benefit Eva states about going out on the land: "I want to go there as a quiet time and peace to really... energize myself from nature."

There have been times when I was out on the land where I was overwhelmed by the surrounding beauty. The seasonal changes are gorgeous to see when you are in the bush. Feeling the warmth of the spring sun and the south wind when I am out in the blind, during the spring harvest, is one of my favourite experiences. Another favourite experience would be feeling the cool crisp air and seeing the frost on the grass in early autumn. These are just a couple of my favourite experiences and I am sure that people have their own. The serenity of the land is a calming beautiful experience as explained by Eva Rickard-Lazarus: "It's so beautiful out there, that's why I like sitting here. I feel the beauty of creation and I look at the tide coming in...I hear these fall birds too." Even being out on the land during a harvest can have a calming effect as described by Adam: "but in most times its serene, its really quiet remember cause you're always looking..."

The connection between the *Ehlileweuk* and the land is the foundation of being *Ehlileweuk*. The practices that define us from the rest of Canadians happen on the land that we call home and if this land ceases to exist, or cannot support our practices, then our identity will change forever. The land is a fundamental component of *Ehlileweuk* identity and through various efforts expressing our identity's connection to the land has been done and one of these efforts was Moose Cree's

Lands and Resources. Lands and Resources allowed for the possibility of exerting our control and involvement on the land and waterways that have sustained us since time immemorial as told by Lillian Trapper:

I viewed lands and resources to take us out of the system we function under and as a tool for our people to re-identify who they really are... this is our land, our resources. It is part of your foundation. It's your identity, if you know who you are and you're rooted, than you'll grow straight (laughs) and you'll know what's right and what's wrong... But if you don't know that and you don't see it like that then you'll only look at the land for resource development. You'll never know who you are if you're caught up in that or still colonized.

Conclusion

The vast set of values that the Moose Cree people believe and try to live and practice are deeply linked with the land, animals and waterways. The land is their “classroom” for learning and practicing respect, responsibility and wellness. Without the land it would be difficult to practice the values that had been taught from previous generations. To conclude this chapter like to reiterate the importance of the land for the continuation of *Ehllileweuk* values with a quote from David Peat: “Knowledge belongs to a people, and the people belong to a landscape” (1994, p. 63). As long as we can maintain the balance between all living beings and the land we can strengthen our families and community.

Chapter Four: *Ehlileweuk* Contemporary Land Use

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the contemporary land use that the *Ehlileweuk* live and practice and this will be discussed through *Ehlileweuk* narratives, *Ehlileweuk* experiences and my personal perspective. A few tenets of current land use discussed in this chapter demonstrate the land is still a major part of contemporary life in the area - in strengthening mind, body, spirit and families. The first section, "On the Land," describes the various *Ehlileweuk* activities that take place on the land throughout the year. The second section, "Relationships With Trees," looks at the connections, uses and dynamics between the *Ehlileweuk* and the trees. Thirdly, new technologies and practices are emerging with our "Relationship With Trees" and these new technologies and practices are examined in the "New Business" section. Finally the further community vision and continued land use and protection are discussed in the last section, "Future Outlook."

On the Land

This section will describe the various *Ehlileweuk* activities practiced today and how the *Ehlileweuk* have adapted their land activities to the contemporary demands of their community-based lives. People from the community still go out on the land to hunt, camp, fish, trap and gather with family and friends and these activities are met with/balanced by several contemporary demands such as employment, costs and education. Schools in the area have breaks in the fall and spring to accommodate students that go hunting and during these breaks (plus some extra days) I would go on the spring hunt with my family.

I remember going out on the spring goose hunt with my family and my brother would go for an extra week earlier with my father. While he was out hunting, he would get assigned so much homework to keep up with what the students were learning in school. After a day of hunting he would work on his homework in the evening after supper under the gas lamp. My parents would talk with his teachers about how when he's in the bush that he is learning and working on other things and didn't have much time to work on his homework. He was working on a different kind of education. As a result, my parents were not too hard on him for not getting his homework package done during the spring hunt, but he always had a homework package to work on when he went hunting, that he received from his teachers.



Photograph of my brother adjusting decoys on the spring hunt in April 2007 in Kesagami Lake

These chances to go out on the land provide opportunities to practice and learn a way of life that was taught and lived by previous generations. In my youth I really looked forward to these trips with my family and friends. Usually in May when the river was broken up from the winter freeze over, my parents, brother and I would head out for a weekend of camping and fishing. This was just one of the seasonal activities I would do with my family and similar activities would happen with other families.

Linda and John Turner's seasonal activities range from summer camping, setting nets after spring break up, hunting ducks, geese and moose in the fall, picking sweetgrass in the late summer, hunting for geese and ducks in the spring. The

Turner's activities happen in certain areas across the territory. Prior to having children, John and Linda used to go trapping in the winter and now only John traps in the winter. As the Turner's family expanded, their practices changed as their sons grew older and went to school. Their trips out onto the land were shortened and less frequent. The Turner's activities describe some of the activities that families engage in throughout the year. In comparison Daisy Turner reflected on the activities she had engaged in with her family and the contemporary practices of her children and grandchildren: "it was nice in a way. But some of them [Daisy's children] still carry on, take their families out... but now they take too much stuff. (laughs)... a big load with their food. They're supposed to be going hunting. (laughs). Yeah that's right it was nice." As more options are available at the grocery stores, families take more into the bush compared to what they used to take long ago.

As people leave home for career and educational reasons they often return and talk about the reconnection they have with the land and people. Lillian Trapper discusses this experience when she goes back to her parents' camp with her children: "...re-roots you when you're gone for a while. It's a good feeling to be there, when I see my children doing things. I see Jonah helping my dad. He's the one that is always hunting with my father." Lillian has worked and lived in the Ottawa area for several years and returns to her parents' camp for important parts of the year with her sons.

Being away from the community for high school and university I can relate to the connection to the land that Lillian mentions. I was happy and emotional when I returned

to the spring camp where I had spent all of my spring hunts, a few years ago. I had made the decision to reschedule my exams and get back to Moose Factory in time to join my family for the entire spring hunt, which I had not done in almost 10 years. It felt really good to see the places where I experienced some of the best moments of my life.

A decision that factors into how much time someone can be on the land is choosing the land based lifestyle or employment in the community. Linda Turner had to make this decision before she went out trapping with her husband John and again after she had her first son William which she discussed in the previous chapter.

I had a job and we decided we were going to go, [I] left my job and went in the bush because it was something I wanted to do and learn. And when we had William we went back with them [Eddie and Caroline Trapper] because he was a baby. And when we [went] back to live with them she showed me the moss¹³ to use and all that kind of stuff. I felt better to be around another family when I had a small baby. Then after that we just went on our own. We just kept taking him [William] in the bush until he started school. After that we went, just us, or maybe one of his nephews would come with us. 'Cause we could have someone to have a partner to go out hunting and stuff like that and to help us out.

Linda learned how women took care of their babies long ago and what was used for diapers and baby powder. Once their youngest son graduates from high school, John and Linda Turner are looking forward to going back in the bush to live and trap during the winter months and take their sons out on the land.

¹³ Moss is used for infants in bags instead of diapers.

Going out in the bush, throughout the area, can result in covering a vast area of different creeks, lakes and rivers. Harvesting and travelling partners can also vary throughout the trips out on the land. Earl Cheechoo shares some of the harvesting trips he makes on the land throughout the year:

I try to go as much as I can. The winter, I spend a lot of time in the bush. I trap. I go traveling around to areas like; Halfway Point, French River, I used to go to Kesagami Lake. I trap around the old reserve, up the river. The winter is the main time. In the summer I am sort of limited. I go every fall up Missinabi River, every now and then I go to South Bluff creek. I go out in the bay, and try and get some geese, if that's considered bush. So that's the main times...I hunt. I hunt moose, geese. I gather smoke wood for tanning hides. I used to cut wood for heat for the home...I remember I used to go across the river, earlier in my life on dog team. I used to go with Muksh¹⁴. I remember we were going to get a load of wood and we lost our dogs. They ran away on us. I can remember going across the river, they call Rabbit Ridge where they used to get wood. That's the main area where people get wood. That's where I used to get wood too. I do a lot of stuff in the bush. It's hard to say. I ride around partridge hunting. I can remember going out very early in my life with my Dad, my uncle, friends, families, my friends' families. I even been to Chapleau bush (laughs), my cousin invited me.

Technology is having an impact on modes and frequency of travel for families and harvesters, as Earl alluded to with his experience with dog sled teams in his youth and his current experiences with snow mobiles. Going out on the land for most people occurs during the weekend, when day trips are made to hunt, fish and cook on the land. My brother is another example of squeezing in as much time in the bush as

¹⁴ Muksh is Earl's first cousin.

possible during breaks from his university program. When he returns home from university during the summer and Christmas holidays he is often going out for day or longer trips to hunt with my father, uncles and cousins.

One of the most apparent technological changes is the increase in canoe size, Daisy Turner explains how she would travel with her family when she would take them out on the land. "...in those days we just had a little twenty foot boat with maybe a fifteen horse power motor, full of kids, groceries and everything, no junk food when we went out in the bay...all the kids covered over in this little boat. Didn't know where we were going, just the driver knew where he's going....". Currently, people rely on freighter canoe and motor to travel to camps when the waterways are good for traveling. More people utilize air travel to get to their camps, on float airplanes and helicopters, when the weather and water conditions are not safe for travel. The high cost of air travel to fall and spring camps can impact the number of people that attend these seasonal harvests.

Eva Rickard-Lazarus' present travels and trips on the land decreased compared to her experience on the land in her youth and childhood where she spent a great part of her youth with her parents, siblings and grandparents on the trap line. Her father used to trap at *Washkogow* with his family, including Eva and her grandparents, all winter. From growing up on her father's trap line Eva believed: "...that kind of lifestyle, the traditional lifestyle, is in my blood.". Eva has also experienced a change in transportation, similar to what Daisy shared, and experienced the difficulty of living on the trap line: "My brothers and I, we were on the trap line

with our parents and it was hard. We didn't have these big canoes you have today... I wonder how we looked in a little canoe with all of us you know? (laughs).". Eva's family faced numerous challenges when out on the trapline, including this incident:

I remember leaving here and I'm not sure what time of the fall it was, how late in the fall. But when we got to Tsnetschi we camped there for the night and we were supposed to go on the next morning to Washkogow. But it got very cold that night and there was a lot of ice on the river...and we couldn't get out again. We had to walk from there to our destination. I think it took us two days to get to Washkogow from Tsnetschi but we had to walk. Like we weren't really prepared for the snow that we've had...we didn't really have anything. But people didn't give up, you had to keep on going. I have a lot of good memories of our family when we were in the trapline

This concludes the descriptions of the peoples' contemporary practices.

Throughout the annual seasons the *Ehlileweuk* go hunting, camping, fishing, trapping and gathering. In the next section the roles trees play in *Ehlileweuk* lives will be discussed. It is clear that life in the bush is still very important to Moose Cree, who continue to go 'into the bush' as much as they can, now using contemporary technological means.

Relationships With Trees

There are many interactions the *Ehlileweuk* have with trees in their contemporary practices. Trees perform several roles for the *Ehlileweuk* such as: teachers, healers, shelter, heat and providers. We, the *Ehlileweuk*, have to seriously take our roles as learners and listeners and practice and honour the roles trees provide for us.

This section will examine the contemporary relationship the *Ehlileweuk* have with trees and in some cases compare how these relationships have changed over the years. The major interactions with trees are heat, cooking wood and various forms of shelters. Some of the less discussed uses will be elaborated in this section along with the selection process for some of the utilized trees. When asked about how trees are utilized today, Lillian Trapper shared how trees were indicators “...if there’s a creek up ahead or an old growth, what kind of animals that would be there, they indicate what kind of animals would be around, where you’d find various plants, berries and stuff like that. If you’re close to a creek more poplars, willows that kind of thing.” Over many years, Lillian learned about trees from her parents. She comments on the trees her father would use and how he would select them:

I was taught the way my dad harvests trees, either for firewood, or building things and he would go around the bush. He wouldn’t just you know ‘oh there’s a tree’ cut it down and burn it. They’d find certain trees for certain types of firewood like drywood, green wood or certain trees for building things like birch and it had to be a straight birch...or he’d use poplar to make a bed and stuff like that. Usually for framing stuff. He goes around checks out the whole area to see what kind of trees there are and he selects them. They are selected over time, over seasons sometimes...Not your first patch of dry wood and go and cut it down. You always keep it in mind, ‘oh there’s good tent poles over here’...you know. ‘Or there’s a big poplar over here there should be a beaver dam close by here’, all that kind of stuff. That’s what I’ve learnt.

As Lillian mentions, the relationship she and her family have practiced with trees goes beyond cutting down trees – it is a relationship that has been taught and practiced over years and generations of her family. It is her family’s way of life. The

cycle of learning and teaching continues with Lillian's sons. The selection process she learned was ongoing, dynamic and adaptable and involved several characteristics to consider such as use and stage of growth. The first characteristic is use and what kind of tree would best meet the end product. The type of tree and the stage of growth are also important characteristics to be considered to meet your goal. When learning about how to harvest trees it's a process that can start at a young age. Lillian Trapper tells her earlier experiences on tree harvesting.

The first trees we ever cut down were when we made rabbit snares...small trees, which ones to cut and how to cut them, how to set up the trap and then the other trees would be dry wood. I never cut green wood (laughs)...its too huge and too heavy of a tree, but dry wood yeah, tent poles.

Another characteristic of learning harvest selection is trial and error from your experience and needs. For example Linda Turner discussed the importance of considering where a tree will fall once it is cut and that you cut ones "that don't get hung up...when you cut them". John Turner shared this observation on what kind of trees he looks for when he is looking for firewood: "You have to cut ones that are not hard to split and with not too much sap in them." On wood for cooking Daisy Turner provided this insight: "we pick trees that don't smoke as much, I mean big black smoke. We just pick trees that make a good fire and gives heat to the food we are trying to roast." John continues to describe the properties and uses of trees they utilize for firewood in the bush and what some trees were used for:

....dry tamarack is about the hottest wood you can find. Birch lasts a very long time. Different trees are used to make things. Like birch, tamarack are used to make snowshoes.

That's what they used to use to make bows, tamarack. Cedar is used for different things, it will never rot, you don't have to treat it. It has a natural preservative in it. It's good to carve, when you carve things.

Trees were also shaped into tools such as shovels and spoons as John elaborates:

....we made shovels one time. You look for a birch tree that is naturally growing like this [makes a curving motion with his hand] along the side of a creek or river and it goes up. You find one about that size. It may be big but you split it into two and you carve it into shovels even spoons

At the top of a big white spruce tree where the tree goes like this [makes a curving motion with his hand], it was big and curves out. Somebody drove a wedge in there. They were trying to take part of it off without killing it. You just put a wedge in there and pound it and then that one little strip will separate and you use it to make a spoon...cause its already shaped like this [makes another curving motion with his hand] eh.

The tools that can be made in the bush can also extend to tools needed for fur stretching. John and Linda Turner shared a practice that is not being seen as much, using trees to make hoops to stretch beaver pelts which require smaller trees for the frame of the hoop:

Linda – ...beaver hoops, a lot of people don't use those.

John – yeah they use plywood

Linda – yeah they use plywood now and cut nails

When people travel to their camps and harvesting areas, maps are not often used. Instead they rely on land marks to guide them to their destinations and these

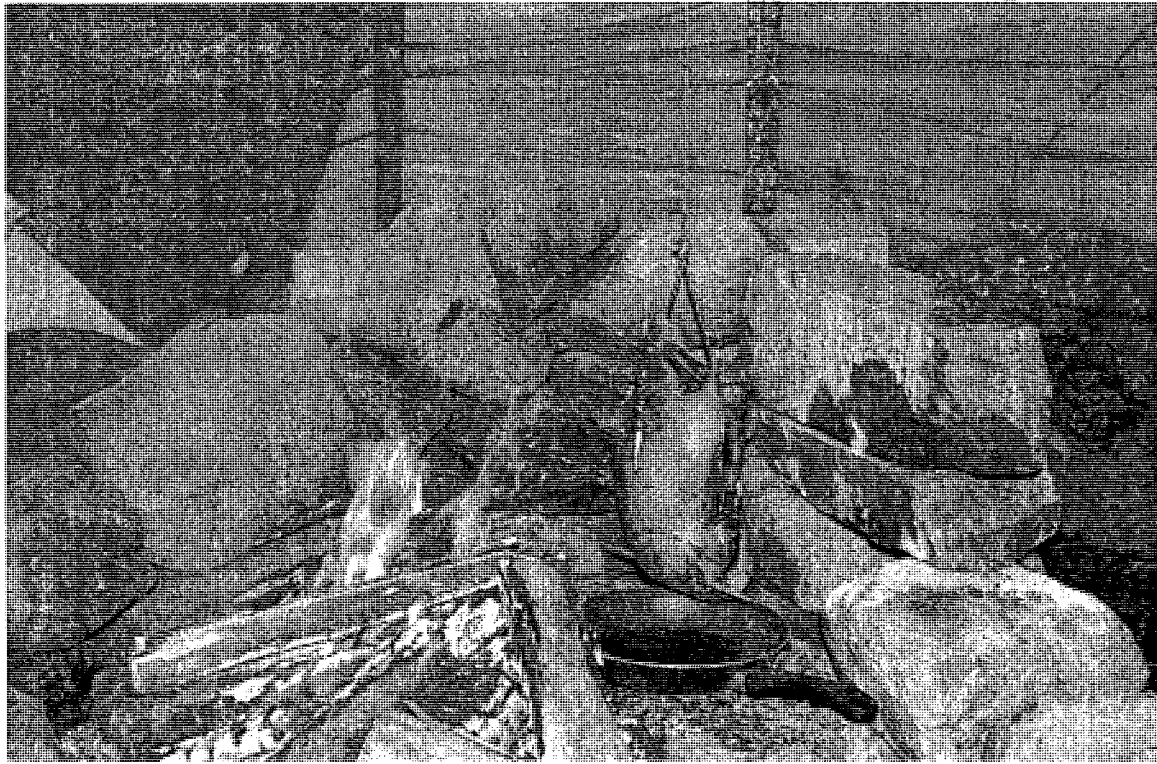
land marks have Cree names and stories, which can act as historical markings. Trees can guide us in many ways, especially in travels on the land as Earl Cheechoo explains:

...depending on the bush like the ridges, it sort of helps me identify where I am. It's like a map. I can remember traveling with Fred Quachegan for example when we were going to Kesagami. This was the first time he was going by skidoo. He used to walk that trail. I can remember every stop we made he had a Cree name for every ridge. When we traveled along, he would have a little story attaching it to funny humorous stories, or [a] story of hard times attached to it.

I never knew that maps were used for actual traveling until a family road trip on the highways of southern Ontario and in cities we haven't been in much. The only time I remember maps being used in the community were for storytelling and checking out potential areas for camps and hunting. One time during a skidoo trip to the spring hunting camp at Wapiskow we traveled on the bay and in the far distance you could barely see the treeline. That treeline guided the drivers to the camp safely.

In Daisy's time at camp she has cooked on open fire many, many times "And we use it for firewood...smoking geese and cooking *saugabaun*¹⁵."

¹⁵ *Saugabaun* is a method to roast a hanging goose over an open fire and is usually done in a teepee.



Photograph of *saugabaun* cooking over a fire in a teepee

Some of the more prominent uses for trees are for heat, food preparation and cooking. Echoing previous relationships with trees Eva Rickard-Lazarus describes how she utilizes trees during her lifetime. The many uses she describes relate to the role of keeping camp and food available through cooking and smoking meats. Eva looks for this kind of wood for cooking: “if you were to cook outdoor...you have the certain type of wood that stays up in flame and not sparks all over where it’s gonna make holes in your clothes.” During the cooler months of the year, there are some trees that are used to heat your home. For instance in the winter Earl Cheechoo shares “....you need a mixture of green wood [and] dry wood” and in the spring he would use “its similar [to winter]... green wood, dry wood smoke wood.”. He also

acknowledges the changes in how he heats his home: “Times are changing and I just turn on the furnace (laughs).”

Daisy Turner shared the importance of trees in providing shelter when you are in the bush, “they help by giving us shelter from the wind and the sun”. On shelter structures, such as a frame to place your canvas tent on Daisy would select trees from these characteristics: “we pick the good straight ones that are strong ... we use quite a lot. I mean for a frame it has to be quite a lot, even for a wigwam¹⁶ it takes a lot of poles, tree poles...and log buildings too, they make log buildings sometimes.”

A type of tree at a point of decay is used for tanning hides. Smoking hides and meat is another activity still practiced in the community. The smoking hides results in a tanning of the hide and is done with specific wood. Earl Cheechoo discusses this type of wood: “.... there’s this *minheen* they call it, it’s this tree that grows along the rivers and it’s a big tall tree. It falls over and naturally decays to a brown square type of ... well that’s how it ends up like a square cube and is used for smoking.” The hides are usually moose, caribou and deer and are processed and dried before they are tanned and are usually sewn into mittens, gloves, slippers, moccasins and hats. Linda Turner has been working with hides for several years and she elaborates on learning about the intricate process.

¹⁶ Another term used interchangeably for a teepee.

Linda – There's live trees and dead trees. And then there's those really rotten trees...that rotten wood, there's different ones you use for that too for smoking hides and there's certain ones that you don't use too in that you use black spruce. What's that other one?

John – balsam

Linda – yeah balsam and that other one there

John - manay

Linda - what do they call that one?

John – white spruce

Linda – white spruce?

John – yeah

Linda – that balsam is good because all that sap is on the outside. And when its rotten there's not much in the wood. The other one minayak, the white spruce when you use that one the pitch is in the wood, but you see it when you pick it... you'll see veins of it or clumps of it in there and if you don't see it all when you use it, your hide is going to be like a funny colour, sticky and hard to sew...I learned that from my mom. Well I know because I made a few boo boos like that too. And those ones there you can use them even when they're wet, you can get it when its wet and just dry it. And they use that wood too when its really powdery they used to use it for babies, like a talcum powder... put it on a cloth and dust it through the cloth like on a baby

Smoking meat, especially Canada Geese after the spring harvest, is a favourite activity and food of mine. I have been on 'bush errands'¹⁷ when we would stop our

¹⁷ Bush errands are necessary to keep the camp running and include cutting firewood, making hunting blinds, and carrying water.

snow machine suddenly because we would come across ‘*nemestake* wood’ and we would gather it and take it back to our camp. John and Linda make *nemestake* at their spring camp and share what kind of wood they use and the benefit of smoking meat:

John – if you want to smoke some kind of meat. Usually look for willow wood that is a little bit dry but not completely, still a little bit alive.

Linda – mmm hmmm, or poplar, dry poplar

John – or dry poplar. And that willow anyway [is] actually good for your stomach and digestion. But you don’t use sappy trees like balsam or spruce. That, that pitch is not good. The smoke from it.

Linda – it’s black too

John – makes your meat black and its not good for your digestion. Yeah (laughs)

Linda – it makes your guts black (laughs)

With the introduction and use of hospitals, health centres and prescription drugs the medicinal sources from the land have decreased in the *Ehlileweuk* lifestyle. An aspect of knowledge of the land that has diminished is the medicinal and healing properties that trees provide. Through her time on the land Linda has some experience on the medicinal properties of some trees: “If you know what trees to use. You can get some medicine for some things...like you could use them for, I don’t know that much but I know there are some we know that we can use”. On the spiritual wellness side of the relationship, trees are used to build ceremonial structures and buildings as revealed by Adam: “if I go to a ceremony [I] could use them for

sundance lodges. Or even teaching lodges, law lodges...sweat lodges...all your lodges. That's what those trees do. They represent that."

This section highlighted the most prominent uses derived from *Ehlileweuk* relationships with trees, in the realms of community and camp living. The types of uses varies from indicators, food, shelter, heat, land marks, cooking, carving, snowshoes and beaver pelt hoops. Associated with use is another complicated selection process that is done over seasons and land areas.

New Business

In this segment recent practices that have not been practiced or were not seen much in the past will be discussed in connection to the *Ehlileweuk* relationship with trees. As the community's economic needs and population grows and more technology is introduced to the area, trees are being used in different ways than from what we have seen in the past. Trees are now being used for economic purposes in the community as Earl Cheechoo explains:

People are selling a lot of their wood now. It sort of helps them... if you go back on that ridge now you can see clumps of where people are cutting more. If you go back to certain areas there are certain clumps there that are still standing there. Its almost like they are naturally sustaining the forest. If you go out there I don't know why they leave these trees there sometimes. There must be a reason. But I think a lot of people are just cutting. A lot of people are using furnace now. We are growing fast, population wise. That's what I noticed. And its like a lot of people are not learning from elders like its elders or family members. But it's not a total loss. People are learning. There must be a balance in there. It sort of balances out.

Currently in some cases it is unknown who their teachers are, the people that are utilizing the land. There seems to be some disconnect as to why some trees are left when a group is being harvested. This form of regulation extends to the business aspect of harvesting. Since there is no body to regulate tree harvesting and the sale of trees, some people's harvesting areas can get over harvested as Lillian Trapper discusses in an incident that a trapper brought to her attention when she was working in Lands and Resources:

This trapper came to tell me that someone was taking trees off his trapline and they're taking too many. "Martens not going to come around" he said. "There's no trees." So somebody was harvesting trees for firewood...I don't know who...but I didn't know how to go about checking it out other than asking other trappers in the area if they seen anybody going in there...like maybe getting firewood either for themselves or to sell in the community make extra money.

Some of the values of asking permission to harvest on someone's land use area have been eroded as given by Lillian and were further discussed in the Values Chapter.

Another recent use is the replanting of trees into backyards on the island as explained by Lillian: "...after break up trees are hanging off the edge of bluffs or hanging on the side of bluffs...People are taking those trees and replanting them in their yards. Instead of that tree dying there they go and, its a small enough tree for them to take it to their house and...put it in their yard."

Technology has made an impact on going out on the land in transportation, communication, entertainment and waste. Quicker and efficient transportation has

made an impact on the amount of equipment and supplies that can be taken out on a trip. I have gone out to camps on boats with outboard motors, helicopters, float planes and snow machines and the equipment we would take ranged from satellite telephones to propane cooking stoves and lamps. I have seen a shift in technology in the short time I have been going out on the land from trail radios (which are still used) to satellite telephones and naphthalene gas to propane fuelled cooking stoves and lamps. Most of the people in the community have seen major changes in technology in their lifetimes. Eva Rickard Lazarus said this about her mother and how technology impacted her life. “She was able to afford this little motor. I don’t know how many horse power it was so that was a little joy in her life”.

Using chainsaws and snow machines to haul wood is also another practice that has changed the way firewood is harvested. The type of wood harvested for firewood has also changed and John Turner elaborates on this: “A long time ago they never cut living trees. They just used dead trees for firewood. They didn’t cut living trees very much, just once and a while when they needed that kind I guess. Now we go out with a chainsaw and cut a big pile of wood and haul it all back home and then let it dry.”

The goose hunt I participate in with my family is a relatively new practice for the Ehlileweuk in the past 30 years. One morning during a spring hunt I had a conversation with my mother on how her father used to hunt in the spring during her childhood. He would hunt for the day and return home the same day. He didn’t camp and he hunted close to the community unlike now where we stay at camp and hunt for two to three

weeks. The availability of helicopters for transportation when the river ice is treacherous could perhaps be a reason for an extended spring harvest.

Future Outlook

There are many challenges facing the Ehlileweuk continued land use including: protection, decreasing opportunities to go out on the land, fluency of Cree language, increased costs, low water levels in the summer, land use planning and shift in priorities. Some people have a vision of what they would like to happen in the future for their families, communities and territory. A key component of this vision is that decision making ability lies within the First Nation residents and is recognized by the province and “outsiders” as shared by Lillian Trapper:

I'd like to see that we take full responsibility for what happens on the land. We have authority when it comes to outsiders, that'd be government, industry, Canadians, and how they come onto our territory. I see them asking for permission to come here, to hunt, to fish. If they want to harvest trees, permission and how it's to be done if they're allowed to do that.that's how it used to be, you had to go and ask a family, 'can we set a net in the lake here?' Some things need to change because their laws, like their fishing laws or act it just doesn't work for us. The way they set up their policy, put their policies in place and it doesn't work sometimes. Maybe part of it would be good but not the whole thing. Those need to change. Then of course treaty, the way we understand it and I've heard is that we never gave up our lands¹⁸.

¹⁸ Treaty 9 has been interpreted by Moose Cree as a treaty that was signed between nation to nation and that we were not surrendering our lands but that we were

The community and political vision includes a council to make decisions on our territories that are representative of the harvesting and gathering areas that families utilize. The decisions that need to be made about a specific area is made by those that would be most impacted.

Resources need to be more available to our leadership to make informed decisions on the territory. Lack of capacity and time to make informed decisions is another problem for the Council and committees as stated by Doug Cheechoo who has served on Council and some committees: “....maybe the council..., or even the secretariat council is.... not prepared, their agendas are pretty full they got a lot to deal with, when it comes to our lands and the environment... I think they need more help.” Making use of the most important resources available to the community, our own people who go out on the land, is crucial in monitoring our territory as explained by Doug Cheechoo:

They [our leadership] got to be more effective managing our territory. Draw something up of our for lack of a better term, zones like our areas, traditional areas. And make sure our whole territory is covered. That way you have more people involved, people that use the land and that. An example [is] our Search and Rescue system when we have an incident we

going to share them with the Queen of England. Dealing with the provincial government with our Treaty right to hunt and fish for the most part have gone well. We are able to harvest without harassment from the province in our homeland. Any other resources there is more contention with the province.

always look for those people that harvest or know that area for expertise. They know every creek. They know ridges, the land. So they've got some principles they could apply there.

Although the frequency and dependence on the land has decreased over the years, the people in the area still rely on the land for practicing and sharing their culture and identity with their family and friends. Families still go out on the land to harvest and gather throughout various times of the year, including my own family. Even though more equipment is now taken out to camps, students take their homework to camps, the values of learning, respect and responsibility are still present during today's practices on the land. However what has changed is the increased pressure and opportunities on the territory for resource development, which leads into the next chapter Community Management Mechanisms.

Chapter Five: Community Management Mechanisms

With the emerging and past interest and exploitation of our homelands by the industry and the province, individuals from Moose Cree First Nation formed a group to take an involved protective stance on their harvesting areas. The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters initiated the first advisory group to Chief and Council on industrial activity in the homelands and laid the foundation for the creation and work of the Lands and Resources Unit and Secretariat. The subsequent formation of the Lands and Resources Secretariat resulted in a new set of challenges and opportunities for the Moose Cree First Nation. The following chapter will highlight the origins, challenges and triumphs of these two groups the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters and the Lands and Resources Secretariat. through interviews with past and present members and staff of the two groups and my insights. The first group to be discussed in this chapter is the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters.

Kichi Sahkahikun Cree Harvesters

One of the earlier management groups, the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters harvested and grew up in the southeastern portion of Moose Cree's traditional territory and formed in response to resource development threatening their harvesting areas. Moose Cree's Chief and Council recognized *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters as a committee and considered their views, advice and suggestions on resource development. The group worked towards creating awareness and educating the residents of Moose Factory and Moosonee about the imposing and occurring development in that area and how close it was getting to the two communities. They worked alongside the owners of Kesagami Lake Lodge, a fishing lodge that has been operating on Kesagami Lake for approximately twenty years in protecting the area surrounding Kesagami Lake from resource development. The two sides shared similar ideas on protection and preservation of the area and fostered a supportive working relationship. The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters also fulfilled their mandate by conducting research through interviewing elders and people that are familiar with that area and creating awareness of the Cree presence through researching the Cree names of locations in the territory.

The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters formally came together in reaction to forestry activity in the area and hopes of becoming a model group for the harvesters throughout *Ehlileweuk* territory as described by Doug Cheechoo.

We'd see markers in the bush and sometimes a helicopter, doing surveys. Then there was talk about Kesagami Lake being harvested [for forestry]. We realized there was nothing

in place in Moose Cree, no committee, board that had responsibility or that mandate to control, monitor and protect our territories. Forestry companies were doing whatever they wanted. We set up our own community based group called the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters. It's not only Kesagami Lake but the Kesagami area because when the people lived up in that area Kesagami was just one area but they would travel to Allen's [camp], Nattagami Lake, all those areas. It's a really nice area. We developed a terms of reference and we focused in that area because we felt it was threatened the most from forestry. If there was a need for another area that they could just take our terms of reference and apply it to another group.

The Cree Harvester's group was only gaining momentum with plans to work with the owners of the Kesagami Lake Wilderness lodge, in protecting the area, when the Lands and Resources Secretariat formed. Members of the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters were invited to be members of the Lands and Resources Secretariat and Doug Cheechoo and Earl Cheechoo joined the Secretariat. Earl Cheechoo said this about his experience and challenges with the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters.

I don't know why we [the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters] stopped meeting... It was hard though we [the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters] didn't have any physical resources. We fundraised on our own. Lands and Resources got funding from sources that would [help] keep administration and everything on file.

The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters felt strongly about protecting and practicing their *Ehlileweuk* Rights in areas prone to industrial forestry. Focusing on an area that they frequently harvested in produced a group that took pride and strength in protecting and creating awareness in the community of *Ehlileweuk* current and ancestral roots there. The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters stopped meeting around

the time the Lands and Resources Secretariat formed. The next section looks at the Lands and Resources Secretariat's purposes, highlights and challenges.

Lands and Resources Secretariat

In November 1999 the Lands and Resources Secretariat was formed and mandated by Chief and Council to manage, protect and preserve the Moose Cree First Nation territory on behalf of Moose Cree membership. The mission statement of the Lands and Resources Secretariat is:

The natural environment of our homelands is responsible for the growth of our Cree culture and traditions. Without our natural environment, our culture and traditions will become extinct. With the guidance of the Creator, our Cree Grandmothers, Grandfathers and Ancestors who lived in harmony with the natural environment, we must protect our homelands to ensure cultural integrity while reflecting sustainable economic development within our territory.

(Moose Cree First Nation, 2008)

This was the first group to formally come together under the Moose Cree First Nation Chief and Council and included a Lands and Resource position on Moose Cree staff. Initially the Secretariat had ambitions of protecting the entire Moose Cree territory and strengthening and enriching the connection between the land and *Ehlileweuk* identity as shared in the Values Chapter by Lillian Trapper:

I viewed Lands and Resources to take us out of the system we function under and as a tool for our people to re-identify who they really are... this is our land, our resources. It is part of your foundation. It's your identity, if you know who you are and you're rooted, then you'll grow straight (laughs) and you'll know what's right and what's wrong... But if you don't know that and you don't see it like that then you'll only

look at the land for resource development. You'll never know who you are if you're caught up in that or still colonized.

During the tenure of some of the Lands and Resource Secretariat members, they experienced a crash course education in learning how industry and the province decimate the forests, land and water through mining, forestry and damming rivers. In “Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations” Taiaiake Alfred articulates the past connection and contemporary disconnection to the land that many Indigenous communities face:

Now, then, and forever, the fight is for the land. The land, and all it has to teach, to give, and all it demands, is what it means to be Indigenous. Living our responsibilities as humans, struggling for balance, demanding respect is the Indigenous way. In a sense, it's so simple, yet so few people seem to be able to disentangle themselves from the teachings of the church and state to see clearly again a human being's place in creation. Alienation and disconnection from the land create confusion and discord in our minds and souls. These manifest in the social and psychic discord that defines our contemporary existences. (2008, p. 10)

Alfred's quote resonates with Lillian Trapper's earlier quote on Cree challenges in restricting how people can think about their homelands, many of them still think within the colonial mindset and not how their ancestors did. Being a member of the Secretariat was bringing our systems and a colonial government system head to head, and this was often really challenging for the Secretariat members.

Another goal of the Secretariat was to inform and involve the Moose Cree membership on resource development proposals, projects and happenings on Moose

Cree territory. Participating in a community management group is an experience in learning how the provincial management system impacts the rights of Indigenous communities. Responsibility for keeping the community informed on what is happening in their territories was also a characteristic of both groups. Earl Cheechoo shares his involvement with both the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters and the Lands and Resources Secretariat and the impacts funding had on both groups:

yes its learning, a place to voice my concerns or community's concerns. I remember when we started that *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree harvesters, I'm pretty sure this is where Lands and Resources formed because of that group. They felt we voiced our concerns to Chief and Council. We met representing, "you're not protecting, preserving our traditional lands." That's the way we felt and we formed that group. I was appointed to Lands and Resources and it sort of continued there. I'm very honoured to be there. I'm appointed now by Chief and Council and it's interesting to learn. Just the learning looking at working with MNR, forestry companies, mining companies. And to learn what their plans are and then trying to voice Moose Cree's views and issues with resource development.

As ambitious as the protection and preservation goals of the Secretariat were, the Lands and Resources administration were mainly funded by industry and the province and this ultimately had an impact on the Lands and Resources Secretariat's agenda. The funding source of a community management group can dictate the group's agenda. If a group receives industry and/or provincial funding (as Lands and Resources Secretariat did) then the industry agenda has a major influence on the work goals and plans. In the case of Lands and Resources, they have at times been "...successful at manipulating funding agreements to promote their own agendas..."

(Simpson, 2008, p. 41). Ultimately, the funding they receive has conditions that need to be met and addressed.

Earl Cheechoo, a present Lands and Resources Secretariat member, discussed the differences he experienced in his time with the Lands and Resources Secretariat and the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters.

Lands and Resources Secretariat is funded by a specific resource for the purpose of resource development. It's funded by Tembec, if you look at the provincial federal system they are run by corporations, such as Tembec. Their influence is how provinces make their policies. When you get money from these places you do have to follow guidelines and criteria in order to qualify for that funding. Where the *Kichi Sahkahikun* group that was formed a lot of work we did was interviewing elders. This is where the traditional knowledge came from. I felt the strength was coming from the people. Whereas you got these provincial people, Tembec people and leadership in the community that's influenced by this type of system, systematic way of thinking and where you have, controlled by this system. You are reluctant to say no. Where *Kichi Sahkahikun* you could say no comfortably and mean it.

Earl shares his perspective on true decision making from the basis of both the Lands and Resources Secretariat and the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters he alludes to the colonial system embodied in our community which Alfred first described earlier in this chapter.

Doug Cheechoo, a former Lands and Resources Secretariat member, also shared his observations about the different geographical focus between his experiences in the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters and the Lands and Resources Secretariat.

They [Lands and Resources Secretariat] had a broader mandate for the whole region and it encompassed everything but unfortunately it wasn't as strong as ours [*Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters] in terms of preserving the territory I guess. It was more open to even resource development.

He goes on further with his comparison between the Lands and Resources Secretariat and the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters.

...we were building our purpose on our mandate and *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters and it was more in the area of educating the public on the traditional territory up in Kesagami region. That was what we were going to do when we were going to work with MNR. We were going to work with anybody that wanted to work with us and it was more preserving that whole area. We didn't want any resource development.

We got to the secretariat our agenda was overtaken by forestry. The council I guess wanted to move in that direction, the forestry sector, and the development corporation was the organization [that] was supposed to take a lead role but we found ourselves like being directly and really involved in forestry, reviewing the forest management plan, the policies and issues and consultation and our agenda was just over, overtaken by the whole forestry. I didn't agree with that and I always questioned, where's the corporation? Aren't they the lead organization mandated by the council to further explore the whole forestry activity in the territory of Moose Cree?

Doug Cheechoo's experience in Lands and Resources Secretariat had a strong sense of stewardship and responsibility in ensuring that their community and people could continue harvesting: "it felt like [we were] there to represent the interests of the people that harvest. I wasn't so much interested in resource development, more like [the] protection of our natural environment: the animals and fish that was my main

focus.” Forestry is an issue that both community groups have dealt with on the land and in meetings. A major difference between the two groups in how they handled development in the territory was their comfort and ability to freely say no to any development.

During one of my summers during my undergraduate program, I did a placement with Lands and Resources. These three months provided valuable insight into the various development stages, including planning, prospecting and clear cutting occurring in the territory and initially it was overwhelming. As a staff member I was fortunate enough to sit in on the Lands and Resources meetings and talk with the members and other staff about the issues facing Moose Cree.

The composition of the Lands and Resources Secretariat seems like a colonial extension of Moose Cree First Nation in that it sets rules, that have been heavily influenced by the Indian Act, on who can be on the Secretariat based on if applicants meet certain criteria (specific number of councillors, membership, elder and a youth). It's another system that is based on the model of government stemming from the Indian Act.

The management and protection of our traditional lands is not done by a land-based method that is representative of harvesting areas. Perhaps if a more land-representative method is used a stronger secretariat would thrive through more informed decisions that would be made and heavily based on knowledge of specific areas. Money also impacts the secretariat. If no one is working in MCFN Lands and Resources Department then the Lands and Resources Secretariat does not meet.

In summary both groups had strengths and weaknesses. The *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvester's met out of collective interest in protecting their harvesting areas from resource development. They innovatively met with Chief and Council and were sincerely concerned about their harvesting areas. They were driven by their own agenda in continuing to practice their harvesting rights in areas that they wanted to remain healthy and free from forestry and mining. They did not have a big financial fund to support their work, yet their lack of funding meant they were accountable to each other and the harvesters of that area and not to a funder. Ideally we would love to find funding to support groups like the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters. Funding is often a huge obstacle in First Nation communities as communicated by Leanne Simpson, a leading Indigenous researcher, writer, educator and activist, "It is time to admit that colonial governments and private corporate foundations are not going to fund our decolonization, because the colonial relationship serves their interests and they remain the beneficiaries of colonialism." (2008, p. 77). The work that the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters undertook was extremely important and played a role in decolonizing our people and lands by protecting our homelands from resource extractive industries by being out on the land.

The format and purpose of the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters arguably could be the most efficient method of community management and in a sense this already happens when people are out on the land. People visit each other when they are making their way out to their camps during the spring hunt. During those visits people have tea and talk about what they have seen and heard out on the land. Even

during the spring hunt people still visit with each other on trail radios for updates on their hunt, visitors, weather, community news and hockey playoffs. Our best opportunity to protect our territory is to have as many people out on the land as much as possible and in some parts of the territory we need to re-establish our occupancy. The province and industry need to know that we are there, on our territories.

On the other hand, the Lands and Resources Secretariat had more resources that they could access and utilize to support their work including funding and administration. Moose Cree First Nation members joined the Secretariat for probably similar reasons the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters that included concern and protection of the territory. The Secretariat was still able to use their most valuable resources, their own people in some cases. Involving the people who utilize the land to inform the community when something is occurring on their territories and also to include them early in the planning process if the community is approached by a development company would be a good step in an inclusive community process.

Doug Cheechoo shares an example from the Lands and Resources Secretariat, the construction of the winter road to the northern communities and the impacts it had on the land users of the region.

It's [the winter road] running through trap lines and the trappers in this area are not very pleased. They were not consulted enough. They don't get any jobs and we should be able to work together. We have different community based groups to monitor, to look after the land. There's a lot of people in our territory that are trappers, they hunt, they harvest berries and up in this area they're the ones that the Secretariat calls on for advice when something is being proposed. One time there was talk of a gravel pit up in this

area. There was a lot of opposition. There was a big push for it by business people in Moosonee. They called a meeting and that's who showed up: the trappers that trap in this area. And they spoke fairly strong about their territory and what an open gravel pit would do. They could do that for the other side of the bay like there's people that harvest around Partridge Creek, all along that shoreline right up to Hannah Bay....*Bishibogahshee, Mishigabi*, they could form some groups to monitor and manage those areas. It would work very good for everybody involved.

The work that the Lands and Resources Secretariat and Unit have done has been a slow climb to establish a good reputation and trust within the community. Ultimately, funding does play a role in the work that can be done in the Lands and Resources Unit. There is always a catch to securing funding from any source and Lands and Resources Unit funding is no exception.

Chapter Six: Forest Management Issues

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the forest management issues that continue to impact, devastate and challenge the Cree people in their territory. These issues will be addressed through Cree narratives, experiences and my perspective. To achieve this, I will examine an early incident on Kesagami Lake that prompted Moose Cree First Nation to take a more involved position on the forestry happening in their territory. The second section will look at provincial planning and consultation processes and conflicts with Cree peoples' practices. The third section will examine the mounting provincial and corporate pressure to 'develop' the land, trees and water throughout *Ehlileweuk* territory. Recently dealing with forestry issues has prompted an interest in creating a community-led forestry project and researching this project presents many challenges in striking a balance between industry and provincial pressures on *Ehlileweuk* cultural, environmental and economic sustainability.

Throughout the issues there are many internal and external pressures: pressure to protect the land and harvesting areas; pressure to compensate; pressure to create

employment; pressure to keep *Ehlileweuk* identity; pressure to be consulted; pressure to work with MNR. These pressures result in most of the forest management issues covered in this chapter.

Kesagami Lake

The southern Kesagami Lake area was cut by Tembec, a forestry company and Moose Cree responded with a more involved, assertive and protective position of their traditional territory. This incident happened in the mid 1990s and it had a ripple effect in the relationship between Moose Cree, the forest industry, and the province. Tembec cut some of Matthew Cheechoo's trap line without prior consent or even knowledge by the First Nation or Mr. Cheechoo. Earl Cheechoo¹⁹ was a member of the Lands and Resources Secretariat at the time and his insight was: "I think it was part of the forestry plan that Tembec had this license to cut in that area but with consultation with Moose Cree. I think MNR got involved and Moose Cree told them not to cut in those specific lots. And they [Tembec] did cut." Some members of Chief and Council and Kesagami harvesters used to take flights to check forestry operations as Doug Cheechoo describes:

....we used to take periodic flights up in that area to check and I'm not too sure how it was found out but I think it was one of those flights. When they found out about that particular cut Tembec was doing, I wasn't there but some people from the band, like William Cheechoo [a Kesagami harvester] and Charlie [Moose Cree's Deputy Chief Charlie Cheechoo], they would go.... check and they found the

¹⁹ Matthew is Earl's uncle.

logging company that was there. They were really close to the lake and they reported it and our chief and council got in touch with Tembec and some pretty heavy discussions, negotiations started and the logging obviously stopped there. They [Moose Cree] went as far as threatening closure of the cutting in that area. From there Tembec and Moose Cree sat down and started talking about forestry and traditional lands of Moose Cree and the MNR also was involved sometimes and it's been a while since that happened. Tembec started to show a bit more respect for Moose Cree and how they're going to operate in the territory of Moose Cree.

As Doug W.T. Cheechoo states this incident at Kesagami Lake got Moose Cree involved in the resource extraction on their territory because industry was destroying their community member's livelihood, history and family heritage. Cutting has occurred, earlier or at the same time as the cutting at Kesagami Lake, in other southern part of Moose Cree's territory and families' harvesting areas were impacted. The provincial ministry's management system is the direct issue that is impacting *Ehllileweuk* land users and harvesters and the system's impacts will be further elaborated.

Provincial Management

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is the provincial government's ministry that manages Crown land and since its conception this ministry has had a profound impact on *Ehllileweuk* harvesting, land management and practices. In this segment MNR policy and laws will be discussed in relation to the current and past impacts in *Ehllileweuk* territory. The discussion begins with the forest management planning process and legislation and will be framed around highlights of the forest management planning process interwoven with Moose Cree challenges and criticisms.

The province of Ontario bases their forest management planning and practices on the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) which on the Ministry of Natural Resources' Overview website is described as the "key forestry legislation that provides for the sustainability of the Crown forest and governs forest management on Crown land". Furthermore, on the same MNR website the "requirements of the CFSA and the provisions of the environmental assessment approval under the EA [Environmental Assessment] Act are incorporated into the Forest Management Planning Manual, which provides the direction for preparing a forest management plan". Additionally, Crown forest areas are divided into management units for the purpose of forest management and are "managed for a broad range of uses and benefits, including timber production". As well, all forest operators in Ontario Crown forest are required to "by law to manage for the long-term health of the forest". Additionally, from the Ministry of Natural Resources' overview of Forest Management Planning website:

Crown forest is the principal source of wood for the province's forest products industry..... Most of these management units are managed by individual forest companies under a Sustainable Forest License (SFL). The sustainable forest licensee is responsible for carrying out the activities of forest management planning, harvest, access road construction, forest renewal and maintenance, monitoring and reporting, subject to CFSA regulations and MNR approvals. Before any forestry activities can take place in a management unit, there must be an approved forest management plan in place.

Forest harvesting requires roads to areas that are otherwise inaccessible and access to these roads can exacerbate resource development in an area, by opening up

the territory for positive and negative uses. A major forestry issue involves access roads, which open up the land to resource development, increased land use and exploration as explained by Lillian Trapper:

Access leads to bigger problems other than just hauling logs out. In some management plans they reforest the roads, they close them off. In other areas they just pull the culverts out but again it just leaves open area where the roads used to be, the animals don't come back there. There's very few in those open roads where the animals were. I would say caribou migrate up and down those roads. You see a lot of caribou tracks on the old logging roads...yeah, they use them to move around. But you never see those caribou. They're very rare...so access is when you do that, you're opening a can of worms...you're bringing in more people other than just the forestry companies

The first forest management planning issue that Lillian Trapper presents is the 'deactivation' and monitoring of forestry access roads. If this is not addressed, moose, bears, caribou will be over harvested, there will be more traffic in the area, and an increased risk of camps being vandalized and having equipment stolen. Road construction is a financially expensive component for extraction infrastructure and once roads are built it is one less huge expense for a project and leaves a landscape that could be altered forever.

Under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, a forest management plan for a management unit covers a ten-year duration. Moreover, according to the Forest Management Planning in Ontario website, the first five years are extensively planned and details include "...that each forest management plan have regard to the plant life, animal life, water, soil, air and social and economic values, including recreational

values”. Furthermore on the Ontario’s Key Forest Act – Crown Forest Sustainability Act’s website the five-year plan is structured so that “Forest operations in a management unit are required to be carried out in accordance with the approved forest management plan, an annual work schedule, and the applicable forest operations prescriptions.” The Crown Forest Sustainability Act’s longer planning term sections of the forest management plan require the licensee to “carry out renewal and maintenance activities necessary to provide for the sustainability of Crown forests” in the license area.

According to the overview of Forest Management Planning System website “a plan is prepared in an open and consultative fashion by a Registered Professional Forester with the assistance of a multi-disciplinary planning team, local citizens committee and input from Aboriginal communities and interested members of the public.” Forest management plans are renewed every ten years and a five year plan can be completed in twenty-four to twenty-seven months and the additional five year plan completed in eight to ten months (Forest Management Planning System website, 2003). Throughout the planning stages opportunities are provided for public input into the development of the plan.

A problem with the forest management planning process deals with the location of where most of this planning occurs: in an office. The Ministry of Natural Resources management is centralized in urban areas and decisions are made from an office environment. If Moose Cree want to participate they have to leave the

community and travel south. Lillian Trapper discusses MNR's management planning and motives:

Everything's done in an office. Nothing is done on ... the ground. They just model things and leave it. They don't actually go look to see exactly what it really looks like... Because what it may look [like] in the model is not exactly what it is. How do they know? As long as they get their royalties they're happy. It keeps their jobs.

The entire planning process of a management unit is based on the province's forest sustainability definition. For example when determining the amount of trees to harvest sustainability is a criterion according to the Forest Management Planning System website: "The sustainable level of harvest, termed the Available Harvest Area, is determined as part of the development of a sustainable management strategy. When determining the Available Harvest Area, objectives for both timber and non-timber values (e.g. wildlife habitat, biodiversity, landscape pattern) are considered." Sustainability can perhaps be applied to the forest industry, that their economies are sustained, but this industry does not truly sustain the *Ehllileweuk*.

Furthermore on the same website, another debatable term used is prescription:

Where operations may affect resource values or areas of interest to stakeholders and interested and affected parties, specific prescriptions are developed to protect those values. MNR, in consultation with the public and interested parties, produces forest management guides for use by the planning team in the development of prescriptions for operations.

I wonder what kind of prescriptions they have for a loss of culture, losing a way of life?

Also discussed in the Forest Management Planning System website consultation “is a key component of Ontario’s forest management planning process” which features the establishment of a “committee” called the Local Citizens Committee (LCC) that “represents a range and balance of local interests, and ensures that these interests are communicated to the planning team”. The LCC provides input into the forest management plan by working with the planning team. Another feature of the public consultation is a “formal consultation process” where the public is notified through notices that they can “review and comment on planning documentation” through various information forums and centers. “Provisions for special consultation efforts with Aboriginal communities” is another element of the consultation process. The last two features of the consultation section of the Forest Management Process are “a formal process for the resolution of issues” and “a final opportunity to request the Minister of Environment to order an individual environmental assessment of specific proposed forest management activities.”

According to the MNR’s Forest Management Planning System website, consultation is a five stage process and the first stage “notifies the public that forest management planning is starting, and invites the public to participate.” Stage two “provides an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the proposed long-term management direction for the forest, optional areas for harvest and alternative road corridors.” Public opportunity to review “preferred areas for harvest, renewal and tending operations and proposed road corridors for the ten-year period of the plan, as well as the detailed prescriptions for the areas proposed for operations during

the first five-year term” comprise the third stage. Another chance is given to the public “to review and comment on the draft forest management plan and the preliminary list of required alterations resulting from MNR’s review of the draft plan” during the fourth consultation stage. The last stage “provides an opportunity for the public to inspect the MNR-approved forest management plan.” Consultation for the second five-year plan follows “a three stage consultation process which is similar to Stage Three, Four and Five of the planning process used for the preparation of the ten-year forest management plan.”

As the consultation process begins, MNR has already invested time and resources into their forest management plans and does not leave much time for preparation for people to assemble their contributions to the planning process. For all the time, money, resources and knowledge the province and industry invests in this process, the Ehlileweuk are not given the same resources and time to fully assess these plans. The consultation process is a showing of the plans that are already in progress for forest management units. The process is a stepping stone in the whole unilateral direction of the forest management planning process.

John and Linda Turner talk about the consultation process, open houses, and how this environment is perceived from community participants:

Linda – I don’t really know how they manage, cause I was never really involved. You know those little postings they put in the paper? ...that doesn’t even. That’s about it...

John – up to this point it hasn’t been good

Linda – it's not very inviting for the ordinary person to go there. They put that little thing in the paper and say 'Come to this and look at the map. This is where they're gonna cut.' Its not...

John – they just do the minimum they're required...consultations even if you get something in the mail they send you a letter directly. Some of these guys don't understand anything about that map that's so fuzzy and everything

Linda – its like they don't want you to be involved when they do it like that

John and Linda discuss the challenges and difficulties in participating in the consultation process. The frustrations of the short turn-around time of the consultation process are further elaborated by Adam, "And when they [MNR] do these plans its short notice. Like tomorrow there's gonna be a meeting...they don't let you know ahead of time, like six months, to prepare for a meeting. Theysay they're gonna give you ten days to put a submission in for a forest management and that's not the way it should be." Keeping up with the consultation process can be a full time career and investing this amount of time into such a process can be overwhelming and frustrating. This process is designed to be difficult, frustrating and intimidating to anyone who wants to participate.

In addition the Forest Management Planning overview website makes "provisions for special consultation efforts with Aboriginal communities". As some people in the area state the consultation process is not enough and is not meaningful and inadequate. This approach of more community meetings does not respect our right to self-determine our future cultural and economic development. Consultation is

done after a few rounds of planning have been completed and this is not respecting our right to self-determination. Stan Louttit shared this on the Ministry of Natural Resources' consultation process:

They don't provide for adequate consultation or meaningful dialogue with First Nations in certain areas. They don't officially recognize First Nations' traditional lands, traditional territories, customary lands. They still refer to those areas outside Indian reserves as provincial crown land and they do with those lands as they see fit. Mostly in this case to please the private sector forestry company. There's provincial legislation, the Environmental Assessment Act has a provision, term and conditions 7.7 it refers to MNR, before they do any work in areas they have to consult in a meaningful way with First Nations. They're breaking their own policies. So they haven't done a very good job, they're still with the mindset that the lands that are customary to the First Nations are provincial lands. They're provincial crown lands and they don't respect the traditional and customary lands of the First Nations. That's where the conflict lies.

On conflict, the Forest Management Planning System website also has provisions for issues that arise throughout the consultations and that "most issues can be resolved through direct public involvement and negotiations". If these actions fail "a formal process is available to resolve issues." The person with the issue must state their issue and a solution in a letter to the author of the forest management plan. The author meets with the person to try and solve the problem. If a solution can not be reached then "the matter is referred to the next level of authority, which is the MNR District Manager, and if needed, to the MNR Regional Director." If the issue still remains, "the concerned party can appeal the decision of the MNR Regional Director by making a request to the Minister of the Environment for an individual environmental assessment of specific proposed forest management activities."

The current management of 'Crown land' by the province is in direct conflict with people who choose not to create or participate in the forest industry in their territory. Yet what repercussions are brought to the province if a major forest management plan is not approved by the community? Will the plan still go forth without Moose Cree consent – but consultation is completed throughout the forest management planning process by the MNR? If we went to one of the MNR's consultation events and stated we didn't want any more forestry to occur in the territory would the forest management plan change? I don't think so.

The Native consultation process that MNR actively implemented as a part of their management process is a recent addition. Earl Cheechoo discusses past consultation effort and the impact on Cree livelihoods:

When they say managing the trees in our area, a while back they didn't even consult us. And they're destroying us. And that's impacted me, when I talk about our relationship to the land. That's who we are and they did come and cut those trees. They are trying to work with First Nations now and trying to include First Nations in their planning with some sort of consultation process.

Consultation is a process that is deemed to fail First Nations from the beginning. As long as MNR continues to plan and present their plans without any First Nations input and contribution from the onset it will continue to only meet MNR and industry interests. Sometimes I wonder if the consent people want is confused with consultation? Consultation is useless if people do not want any forestry in their land use areas; it merely involves a series of meetings and postings that happen regardless of what they want. This process is flawed and does not assure Indigenous

Peoples' rights are fully respected, when the project will go ahead regardless of what objections are heard from Indigenous Peoples. In most cases, community consultation is lead by the province or industry, which is far from being a neutral party. Indigenous Peoples have a right to reach an informed opinion on any projects happening in the territory through full disclosure of information, including negative impacts from a project.

Practices

MNR's forestry policies contain convincing environmental jargon and terminology promoting 'benefits', 'long term sustainability' 'prescriptions' and 'consultation', indicating a just and fair process for all involved. This section will look at what these terms translate to on the ground from a Cree perspective. Clear cuts unfairly and unjustly conflict with Moose Cree values and contemporary land use. The main conflict with *Ehlileweuk* values is the specific forestry practices Ministry of Natural Resources allows, which have devastated the land, water and animal habitats and severely disrupt the balance of the land. These impacts are unwanted in the territory. This section will also highlight how terrestrial, aquatic, avian wildlife and landscapes and waterways are impacted by forestry. Stan Louttit discusses the impacts clearcuts have on animals and waterways:

it will take away the habitat of wildlife in that area. It will cause erosion of that area due to the rotting trees which would have an impact on the ground by creating erosion along the shores...a lot of the animals require rivers and creeks for their sustenance. Not only water animals like beaver, otter, mink, muskrat and those ones. Even wolves, fox, marten require

water to survive...and it takes away from shelter along the river and smaller waterways

Earl Cheechoo also shares similar waterway concerns: “....forestry cuts a lot of trees along the river system, they follow a guide that’s so many feet from the rivers. [If] They don’t, it’s not healthy for the rivers. It does a lot of damage.” Erosion of banks into streams would increase turbidity of waterways and create murky waters.

Terrestrial animals are another important concern when clear cutting is discussed; they depend on the forest for survival. Eva Rickard-Lazarus discusses some animal’s forest needs. “Some animals can starve. There are some animals that really live off different trees. And they also have their shelter... they live in the trees”. Earl discusses terrestrial and aquatic populations and habitat impacts from forestry:

It really disrupts their habitat.if they cut a certain area and animals existed there for a long, long time. When a forestry company goes in there they will disrupt that certain population of animals and they [the animals] will have to move. There is going to be these animals that move to another area, there is going to be some disruption with the other animals that are there. It goes on, you are forever disrupting animals. Could be moose, could be marten, could be beaver, could be birds it could be... it interrupts the cycle

Many harvesters rely on the rivers to travel to their camps and harvesting areas. Fishing is also another important harvested food for the diet of some community member and increasing sediment in the river would have disastrous impacts on the fish in the area. The river system is valuable to all livelihoods and

forestry would devastate this ecosystem as Lillian Trapper explains: “It [the water] wouldn’t be clean anymore. There’d be run off, soil, [it would] get all murky andfish would be affected and other water life...”. She further elaborates on terrestrial impacts:

To the animals, basically that would be like me coming to your house and taking your walls down and your roof. And then your floor it’d be open to all the elements and then everything just gets destroyed... basically you’re destroying a habitat of animals of various kinds... To the land, you’re exposing the earth, its like taking a piece of your skin through your hair, you’re making it bald ...then you’re exposing it, you’re causing the imbalance to happen. When its bare the soil deteriorates. It becomes dust cause there’s no trees there to drink the water or to hold the soil

Forestry operations and the aftermath of harvesting are a major issue with *Ehllileweuk* land users. In some Cree harvesting areas, forestry operations wasted trees. Lillian Trapper raises some important questions and concerns around this practice: “...how do they cut so many trees down and they leave some behind? they’re all part of the pile. How come they didn’t take them out? If, they just leave them there and they just rot... they got all these little piles of wood all over the place.” Leaving trees is a direct value conflict with the Cree value taking only what you need and do not waste the rest.

One of the ‘prescriptions’ to address human impacts is compensation. Forestry operations have impacted some Cree harvesting areas and are in the process of being compensated or were compensated. Eva Rickard-Lazarus speculates on compensation “...people, they’re thinking of dollar signs especially when all these

logging companies come in...and maybe some of our people think like that too. Like they'll get compensated if somebody's gonna come to their trap line but they don't realize how much damage has been done to the land and the forest."

The language MNR uses is not how Moose Cree would use the same terms in the same context. Our definitions greatly differ from the MNR's especially when it comes to sustainability. We take sustainability very seriously when it comes to the territory and ensuring that there are trees, rivers, fish, beaver, muskrat, geese, moose, ducks and rabbits available to sustain future generations.

The Pressure to Develop

Opportunities to 'develop' the territory's 'resources' are vast and a serious issue with the community, families and region and at some point, it will affect most families. Mineral exploration is occurring in an area where my grandmother grew up and where I fish with my family. Forestry is occurring in the area where my father's family sustained themselves during summer months and where we now go for our spring Canada goose harvest. Power lines, increased traffic and more harvesting happened in an area, where some of my family still harvests, along the seasonal winter road between Moosonee and Attawapiskat. Currently, the road is maintained and heavily used by DeBeers' Victor Diamond Project in Attawapiskat First Nation's territory.

We have a right to natural resources, an economy, our territory, health and development. We have a right to self-determine like all people do. The pressure to develop crept up on us and forced us to react to it. Doug Cheechoo encountered

pressure when he was a member of the Lands and Resources Secretariat from various entities, including Moose Cree First Nation.

Oh yeah, a lot of pressure from resource development, mainly forestry. There was some consultation done maybe seven or eight years ago. They did a bit more [consultation], the Moose Band Development Corporation, to the council and began pursuing the forestry activity. The secretariat, the mandate they had, to make sure there was proper consultation and it wouldn't harm the land, the way that forestry has in other regions. There was a lot of pressure from that angle. The pressure wasn't too bad from our own people like to [look] after their trap lines or their traditional ways of life and that's where I felt a little more pressure then and that I had the responsibility to do that....

A lot of the pressure came from government. They have a lot of control but I don't know if they are responsible. They don't care. They've got a very, very poor record of protecting the environment. In Ontario all you got to do is look at the waters, how polluted they are or the land and how the trees are all cut and how far north they need to go to find trees. I felt pressure from the government too, in trying to work with them to protect the environment.

Doug Cheechoo highlights the different aspects of government pressure. On one hand the government wants to 'develop' the land and at the same time they want to form a partnership with Moose Cree to preserve and protect the land although the two groups have two very different values and outcomes on preservation and protection of the land. Such a partnership would be delicate to navigate and achieve, if not nearly impossible.

As a member of Lands and Resources Secretariat, Eva Rickard-Lazarus became aware of the global market for the wood that is harvested in the area,

The forestry operation[s] around these territories is not only for us. It seems like it's for the whole world. ...I don't know if we really need that...I guess because we are so rich with the forest around here. Our trees are healthy that's probably the one reason why they attack our area.

As Eva mentions 'development' can feel like an attack on the area, like someone is invading your home and taking something that is not theirs and leaving a mess for the homeowners. I have had that literal feeling of theft when something was taken from our camp. Lillian Trapper shares her thoughts on challenges and intrusions of current forestry operations:

... its sad, frustrating, it makes me angry at times...it hurts when somebody just comes there and legally they have a right to do that...but its not our law, its their law...and we have to live under that or we live under it. So things need to change. Yeah we should be able to live together too.

Some things need to change because their laws, like their fishing laws or act it just doesn't work for us. The way they set up their policy and it doesn't work sometimes. You know maybe part of it would be good but not the whole thing. Those need to change. Then of course treaty we never, we understand it and I've heard is that we never gave up our lands. We were willing to share it and we need to stay and you know taking furs, fish and trees for their ships and whatnot...we need to go back to that and say this is what it was, be honest and faithful to the agreement that was made. That needs to come back somehow. That needs to be readdressed or addressed and European people or white people need to understand that. Cause there's such a blindness there everything like that. They just see it their way and that's it.

As Lillian states when the treaty was signed our ancestors envisioned a relationship that is very different from today's relationship. Furthermore, she believes that it is possible for everyone to live together and coexist peacefully, where both

economies can exist on the territory. It is possible if existence means rights and cultures can thrive in the area of contention and not be trampled by corporate greed. Corporate pressure was applied to the Lands and Resources Secretariat. Doug Cheechoo discusses the pressure put on the Lands and Resources Secretariat and the overlap of responsibilities that were experienced among the Moose Cree administration.

We got to the secretariat our agenda was overtaken by forestry. The council wanted to move in[to]... the forestry sector and the development corporation was supposed to take a lead role but we found ourselves [the Lands and Resources Secretariat] being directly and really involved in forestry, reviewing the forest management plan, policies, issues, consultation and I didn't agree with that and I always questioned where's the corporation? Aren't they the lead organization mandated by the council to further explore the whole forestry activity in the territory of Moose Cree?

Navigating resource development in the First Nation administration proved to be extremely challenging and perhaps because it was impacting several families a department did not want to be responsible for making those crucial decisions on where trees would be harvested. In this case, the Moose Band Development Corporation has been working with Tembec and being unclear on the extent of this relationship to Moose Cree citizens, which has been the source of much speculation and discussion. Lillian Trapper felt that enough forestry was happening in the territory to not need another forestry operation, even a community based one, but instead the land needs time to heal.

I don't know if we need to have a forestry operation. There's enough forestry in our territory. We need to be involved

because they've made a mess of it. There needs to be some kind of healing, replantation all that kind of stuff needs to be done. And be part of how they're harvesting now and where they are harvesting. The people that are harvesting are there for profits, it needs to change and I think it's going to change, if new management mechanisms are used. Like through the certification process and stuff like that. We could use a forestry operation but I wouldn't want it where its being proposed now...In that proposed Moose Cree Management Unit area. It's too close to home...and we're right on the edge of the boreal forest. Some of those trees in there take 200 years to grow like 3 feet high. That's some of the data that was collected there. And you're at the edge...you're in a middle of a change of going from a boreal forest to muskeg and you're in between there.... So you're on the edge of the boreal forest, so it's different than being in the boreal forest.

She also touched on the shift in purpose of running a forestry operation.

When most participants were asked about community forestry, this was something that was mentioned by all where profit could not be the sustainable answer but a focus on employment needed to be the new foundation of a forestry project. The next section will closely look at a community forestry project.

The pressure to develop is something we've been faced with ever since European contact and it feels like never ending pressure. If one company does not develop one of our 'resources' another company will. There are several First Nations challenging the development occurring in their territories that could set a precedent on how companies and the province conduct business on 'Crown land'.

Community Forestry

Community forestry has been discussed to address several community issues including: employment and training, control exertion of the territory and shifting past

forestry harvesting priorities to a set of priorities aligned with Moose Cree priorities. In this section, challenges and opportunities in community forestry will be elaborated. Community forestry creates an opportunity to shift focus typically associated with industrial forestry's 'cut and run' history to a long-term sustainable approach. The major challenge facing community forestry is achieving a balance between lifestyle activities and economic income. With a rapidly growing population more people will need employment to support their families and their land use activities. Forestry is being researched to provide employment and economic benefits, along with other land uses and values, in a community-led and driven land use planning process. Stan Louttit highlights the lifestyle shift and community forestry needs.

Depends on how you look at it. If you ask that question twenty years ago they probably would have said no. We're fine the way we are. We can't really go into it. We don't want to damage the land and the trees. As we go into the next generation we have to begin looking at economic opportunities for our communities and our people. So that they can hopefully have a brighter or a better future than today's. And one of the ways is getting people to be employed and to have some economic development in our communities, but we have to do it in a way that's respectful to the environment, land, trees and the wildlife. If its planned properly it can be a benefit to the communities, again it is up to the community if that's how they want to proceed. It should never be at the mercy of forest companies, or government. It should be at the discretion of the individual peoples that live in that community before anything happens.

As Stan states the community needs full buy-in before any development occurs especially in a community driven project. Once buy-in is reached Cree activities must be balanced with forestry project impacts and some impacts might be

minimized. Earl Cheechoo perceives the prominent issue of balancing economic benefits with our land practices:

....it can provide, for economic reasons and we need these types of resources to develop but it can destroy our culture. There is a lot of resource development in Canada and other parts of the world and it's destroying our air, the ocean. As long as it's not overdone because as people living in two types of cultures where we are trying to live in balance or harmony with who we are, its hard. But as long as it's worked in a way it respects our culture. Our Cree culture.

Creating financial independence from welfare is another issue in the community and the obvious way to alleviate welfare dependency is through economic development. Thinking about economic development often leads to forms of development that are devastating to the land, water, trees and culture. Economic development is starting a cycle that can be environmentally destructive as Adam observes.

You're trying to get your people off welfare thru creating employment...and then you create employment, then you destroy your natural environments a lot of people have to wrestle with that and a lot of people agree to go ahead and we will get jobs. But the perception is wrong, they don't get jobs...and this is where we make our mistake 'oh yeah go ahead its gonna create lots of jobs, lots of employment' and then we don't get employed. Our young people a lot of them, they are unskilled.

He also observed jobs arising from economic development initiatives often do not get filled by people from the communities because community members are unskilled and untrained to carry out these jobs. Starting a community forestry operation would need to have a community-based training component to ensure our

people have the skills for the jobs. In the report “Capacity for What? Capacity for Whom? Aboriginal Capacity and Canada’s Forest Sector” case studies on initiatives that built capacity and employment in the forest industry were done on a few Aboriginal communities in Canada (Stevenson and Perreault, 2008, p. 7). The results from this report included:

For the most part, these initiatives failed to improve the economic and social well-being of forest-dependent Aboriginal peoples and communities. Given the current state of affairs in Canada’s forestry sector, we must ask whether commercial forestry is an appropriate foundation upon which to build sustainable Aboriginal communities. Capacity building initiatives aimed exclusively at increasing Aboriginal participation in commercial forestry sector may, in fact, be setting up Aboriginal peoples and communities for failure, disappointment and ultimately greater dependency. (Stevenson and Perreault, 2008, p.7)

According to this study even if we did have the programs and opportunities to create capacity to work in the forestry sector, there would be a fair chance that we could fail. The report goes on further to address what kind of capacity building, needs to be invested in Aboriginal communities:

... “top down” approaches to Aboriginal capacity building must be met with “bottom up” approaches to achieve synergies and mutual aspirations for improving the lives of Aboriginal peoples in forest-dependent communities and conserving the cultural and biological diversity of our forests. Greater support of existing Aboriginal capacity building programs is needed in order for Aboriginal peoples to effectively engage in existing employment and business opportunities and address other challenges over the short-term. However, this must be met with the creation of new institutional approaches to building capacity in Aboriginal communities that supports their efforts to plan and realize a

sustainable future from their lands and resources based on their goals and priorities. (2008, p. 8)

Definitely the “top down” approach has been invested into in our First Nation. Staff and community members do get plenty of opportunities to train in the resource industry sectors with the end goal of working in the industry. However, investing into developing our own capacity is sorely lacking. We are often in reactionary mode and do not have the time to plan our goals and aspirations for our homelands, our people and our community. We are often trying to fit into the colonial and corporate economic system. We do not have the time and resources to invest into our own systems and creating an economy that can sustain us.

Development pressure has influenced the type of research projects that gained Moose Cree First Nation support. Earl was a Lands and Resources Secretariat member and shares their discussions on land use planning research:

....we debated and now that each and every one of us as a committee and community member there's been interviews. I think they identified many areas, land use planning, occupancy planning. It's done to protect or to minimize the effects on who we are. It's not complete but its work for our future and its part of working towards minimizing land and water impacts. There's more to land and water, its spirituality, it's another way to look at who we are and our relationship with land and water.

The relationship with the land is much more than sustenance; it is a spiritual refuge for families from the onslaught of the social issues in Moose Factory. Damage to the land is the biggest concern when considering a community forestry operation (or any resource development project) and the impact this would have on families.

Therefore, minimizing the damage from forestry would be a key objective in a community forest management plan, where the community and especially land users of planned areas would have critical input and design over the project. However, years of colonial impacts and distrust from MNR plans and policies caused some people to think that Moose Cree is incapable of assembling their own plan. John Turner discusses a perception shift and mental focus of planning a forestry operation.

There's a real lack of almost like self confidence that we can do that and that we just have to sort of go along with that forestry company. If that forestry company says we have to do it this way, we'll just agree with that rather than fight them on it. If the most important thing is not profit, and the most important thing is jobs and the land. If they rearrange it all so that the focus is completely different...

Challenging the inability to think we could create a plan that reflects our values, terms and knowledge is something that another participant discussed. When a forestry company gets involved it already shifts the focus and purpose in harvesting trees. Forestry has already been occurring in the territory and earlier on, no money was seen for the trees that were taken. For the past decade, the First Nation and some families were in dialogue and negotiating compensation packages from forestry companies that were harvesting without consultation. Some community members' experiences with forestry companies' practices have lead them to the point where they do not think compensation or revenue sharing agreements can help improve community members' quality of life.

I'm not sure if forestry can improve our community. We seem to always fight for a little bit of dollars to what we should have. Our community seems like we are forever

fighting with Tembec to squeeze some dollars out of them...they don't tell you "I'll give you so much because I'm cutting in your area." They seem to always have to fight [for] their compensation...its not just given to them...even though its our territory, its our traditional land...people just take and...I don't know how we can improve that but we have been fighting for the last 100 years and I don't know how much longer we're going to fight.

Eva Rickard-Lazarus

Eva states that we've been fighting developing our land over the past century and that the fight is not near completion. Development has been occurring at an accelerated rate in the southern parts of the province and now it is creeping north and threatening the way of life in this area making people debate its purpose and usefulness. Who is 'progressing' from this development? We certainly are not, as explained by Linda Turner:

When I think about forestry, I don't really want anything to happen. Why can't we just leave things the way they are? Leave that land the way it is, with those trees and it will be there all the time for everybody, for us, for these ones that are coming along the ones yet to be born. They'll have something. That's the way I feel about forestry, I don't really like it...I don't really want it to happen around here. Down south they never bothered with the north before. Now that they're using up everything down there they come looking over here I say why bother with us now? Leave us alone.

A community forestry operation has many possibilities and benefit potential for individuals and the community's financial economy²⁰. Lillian Trapper's insight on potential community improvement from forestry:

It can, if we know how. Like people know how to work in the bush. People know how to take care of that area and how to cut it properly. Instead of just going in there and cutting, desecrating the land... That's what it seems when I look at forestry. But I've seen other forest stands being cut that weren't harmed like in a bad way... you could see where it was cut but everything else looked natural still.

Some community members believe it is possible to achieve a balance between the land's health and creating employment for community members. Refocusing community-based forestry's goal would take some political and environmental will

²⁰ There are a couple of Native communities that have gotten involved in forestry projects on different scales that could provide valuable lessons and ideas to Moose Cree. The first one is the Menominee Tribe in Wisconsin where their reserve lands 235 000 acres 220 000 acres are forested. "The Menominee have managed to sustainably manage their forests for 141 years... they have fully utilized the forest, increasing its commercial productivity while maintaining its overall health..." (Davis, 2000, p. 20). The second example is Waswanipi Cree's involvement with forestry in creating employment for their young people. Waswanipi Cree run their own logging operations and auction their wood to local mills. However, "concerns for how logging operations are conducted in the region are widespread among Waswanipi of all ages and occupations" (Feit and Beaulieu, 2001, p. 130).

from our leaders and land users to stick to their goals and support their culture through protecting harvesting and sacred areas. John Turner's outlook on the forestry possibility in the territory was:

I think forestry can be done, its possible that it could be done right. But I don't know if they will do it. I don't know whether the community will have the will to try. They will probably just go along with the company. I don't know if they would fight for a forestry project where they cut selectively and all that kind of stuff...yeah I think if they did, it wouldn't be too bad, but whether or not they are gonna do it is another question. Like I was saying we are losing all those values and maybe, by the time it keeps happening like that by the time we get into forestry we will be living like white people here.

John stresses the importance of whether we will stick to our values and not go with forestry companies' values and purposes, if we get into a forestry operation. Lastly, a change in planning and harvesting methods needs to occur by using our own people's land knowledge.

You're not going where there used to be an old campground and driving your bulldozer, your skidder over it. And that knows the creeks and the rivers and how they flow...when they're high, how high they get and stuff like that. Somebody that knows that area would have to be there. It would be like the foreman kind of thing. That's how I see it. You can't just bring somebody like a registered forester to come there and say 'okay we're gonna do this you know and plan this' da, da, da...No, it has to be somebody that has knowledge of that land. That needs to be part of it. You can't just use a registered forester to run it...you need the knowledge. You need a registered Indian there. (laughs)

Lillian Trapper

A major challenge is whether Moose Cree is going to work within existing provincial policy and law and exert control over how their land is going to be managed. Lillian Trapper discusses the provincial laws, policies and compromises the Lands and Resources Secretariat made during her time there.

The biggest challenge would be... authority. We did not have the authority to do what we wanted. We always had to ask for permission.... on our land. We had to ask someone. They'd only give us money if we only do this, you know, 'we want this'. It was the only way. They always had the chip, we never had anything to play with, to use...to bargain with them cause they always said it was their land. "We'll let you manage it if you get a license.'...Why should I get a license for my own land? That was one thing I said to the secretariat one time. 'Who says we have to get a license?' This is our land. Who said, we'll work in all this information that we're doing all this scientific information, all our traditional knowledge information... its working towards a license. Who says we have to get a license? This is a clean slate we could do it differently. No response. (laughs). I thought, try to do things differently instead of same old 'oh we'll get a license and we'll harvest trees.' We don't have to get a license...you know? We never needed a license before. (laughs) Why get it now? We could trade our trees with whoever we wish...that was the biggest obstacle, authority. With authority come all these powers for money. It was always about money...But when I look at that, I always think of it as 'here!' throwing crumbs you know? It's hard to look at it positively.... The good thing is that they're acknowledging that First Nations are there...that's a good thing. But to be throwing crumbs? There's got to be something more to it than that. That's not right, that's not fair.

A major challenge that would need to be addressed with a community forestry operation would be a shift in harvesting methods from machinery to manual methods that would have minimal impact on the ground. Lillian Trapper supports such an approach: "This operation can be done if it's done all by labour...machinery to a

certain extent that's how I would see it. They use these big machines, skidders, fellerbunchers and they're heavy. They're huge." The large machines used in current large-scale forestry operations have detrimental long-term impacts on the landscape. Linda Turner during one of her trips on the land observed this landscape impact: "Many years ago this wound was still there from the [machine] track and they use all kinds of big machines to do forestry." Creating the question of how long are these impacts going to be felt by the community and land harvesters?

Community members practice selective harvesting for past and present projects. John and Linda harvested trees for log buildings and shared the following regarding this experience:

Linda – and you did it all the right way to cut the trees

John – mm hmm, put tobacco there for those trees. You can't even see now if you go where we were cutting

Linda – and you marked all the trees that those guys were supposed to cut.

John – you won't be able to see where

Linda – You picked them all out eh?

John – and we used a lot of the tops for firewood. We didn't waste. We cut the stumps off right at the ground and we carried them out

Linda – no machinery, not a lot of damage...then they would carry them up the bank and it was really steep. The way we did it too, it was all onsite where you guys fixed up the logs too eh.

John and Linda's experience highlights the amount of work and time it took to responsibly harvest trees which directly conflicts with the paradigm of industrial forestry where a fast harvest rate increases profit and keeps costs low. In the late 1990s Moose Cree First Nation was in the process of constructing an eco-tourism camp and a crew from Moose Factory spent the summer on site constructing the buildings with logs from the area. This example highlights that logs can be harvested for buildings and impacts are unnoticeable. Lillian Trapper shares this example of low impact log harvesting.

....when we harvest trees to build a log cabin you don't see it. And a prime example was when they built Washow²¹, all those 2000 logs harvested, MNR had a concern with that. They went over there to look for where they cut out all those logs and they couldn't find any evidence that those logs were cut down from anywhere (laughs). Because it was done the right way...Peter²² was the supervisor and I don't know how many he had as a crew...They had a whole bunch of them there. That were out there. That cut down all these trees for Washow...and MNR heard about it and you know, 2000 trees, 2000!? They [MNR] went to go look, they couldn't find it...I don't think they [Peter and his crew] even told them where they got it from. They [MNR] didn't even know where to look. They couldn't find where these 2000 trees came from and it was all done by labour...chainsaw, cutting it down, hauling it out you know? So there was very minimum impact

From John and Linda's experience and *Washow* construction it is possible for selective harvesting to occur relative to the scale and use of the harvested trees. The

²¹ Washow is still under construction.

²² Peter is Lillian's brother.

land knowledge and manual power is there to start a community forestry operation. Traditionally Aboriginal Peoples' role in the forest industry has been relegated to labour and silviculture prescriptions such as tree planting. The most profitable stage of the industry is processing the trees into a useable product such as pulp, paper or lumber. Lillian Trapper highlights Aboriginal Peoples' standard involvement in the forest industry and where revenue is generated:

The actual harvesting of trees is not where the money is; the milling part that you're making most of your money. And then the silviculture or the replanting of trees there's not very much money there. It's the milling part the actual...you know making lumber and that's where they make most of the money in the whole forestry cycle...and they always put the Indians either harvesting or tree planting (laughs). They never allow them to have a mill...they're always putting theirs up or there's already mills that provide so many wood to each mill. That's what the government does, they manage how many trees go to each mill. And they have to make sure that mill gets that many trees that year. If there's a shortage, cause of there's a burn or whatever they'll have to get trees from someplace else to...to fill in that gap

There are environmental considerations to deal with, if a mill is established in the region. A water supply is required for a mill to process trees and the mill location and water requirements would ideally be on one of our rivers. There are already a couple of mills south of the Moose River basin, where effluent is dumped into a river that forms into the Moose River tributary and flows downstream past our community. Adam shares his perspective on mill impacts:

...if they were to have a mill, they have to dump their garbage into the rivers or onto the land. If they dump it on the land, it will still seep into the river eventually. it's

really, really difficult if you're going to put a mill here then you have the smell...its gotta go somewhere on the land.

Shifting forestry's traditional economic gain focus to meaningful *Ehlileweuk* employment is the largest reason for beginning a community forestry operation. "They can improve if people are willing to work in forestry, if it's done right and profits aren't the goal." Lillian Trapper states and continues, "They can do forestry to generate revenue for people to have jobs but not to try and be filthy rich...then you're taking too much." Ultimately the difference in forestry goals originates from perception of the land and waters as shared by Adam, "The European system, when they look at trees they see money. An Aboriginal person sees a tree, they see life. And there's no comparison because the way we see it, its life. A life form, and for Europeans it's not life. It no longer exists."

The community forestry issues and challenges are extensive and enormous and center on a major shift in the 'resource development' objectives including a shift in harvesting methods and business goals. Another huge challenge is taking a stand for using our own peoples' knowledge and complementing that with science instead of traditional forestry practices. I do believe that a community-based forestry operation is possible but so many parts need to come together to really make it a holistic project.

Consultation

Consultation will always be a challenge for Moose Cree to conduct with their own people. From past industry and provincial consultation efforts there is very little

faith or trust in the process. There have been too many times where 'consultation' has failed them, that it would be tough to establish a community consultation process.

Exacerbating the distrust, our Chief and Council continue to negotiate with companies already developing our resources and leaving the public out of these negotiations until a settlement package is negotiated and ready for the community to ratify through a vote.

The pressure the council is under originates from several sources including the community, the province, the industry and perhaps even their legal counsel. The council is in a tenuous position that I can empathize with.

Our land use plan planning process is being done in conjunction with MNR and the Ministry of Development and Mines and is aiming to meet our values, practices, protect sacred sites, protected areas, along with plans for mining, hydroelectric development and forestry. This is an opportunity to try and meaningfully consult with our own people. Elders, youth, men and women advisory groups have been set up to meet and discuss various issues on the community land use plan and also harvesting families from various areas in the territory will be consulted as well.

In the meantime, while community land use planning is underway the province is issuing permits to companies in the southern part of the territory. The province is not respecting us by continuing to issue permits in our territory. This is a good example of the province 'respecting' our rights, and perhaps leaving us with no land to 'manage' under their land use planning system. How are we supposed to plan for land and water when the province is already allocating to mining and forestry companies? Yet when the plan is complete, I estimate that the province will laud this land use plan as a landmark

in First Nation to provincial government partnerships and conducting sustainable planning beneficial to industry, government and First Nations.

Consultation challenges within the community will need to be addressed for any community-led projects to be successful. Doug Cheechoo elaborates on community consultation:

I was more concerned for the protection, the preservation of our area. I never admittedly said 'yes, you know let's get into forestry.' And I wanted to delay it, or I'd still like to see it delayed, but its happening everyday and sometimes I get very discouraged and upset with our leadership for not taking a stronger position and allowing all the forestry in the territory to continue. There's no consultation in the community with forestry. I wouldn't call what was done consultation, ...

It's not enough. I don't think the formal approval was given by our community. I haven't seen that anywhere in a band council resolution or a motion. Yet our corporation develops out in the territory and they're going and getting contracts, the government and Tembec are using the corporation to harvest trees. I don't think its right. Forestry is happening and its unfortunate but I don't think most of our council know what's going on. We have a lot of resource development activity on our territory and our council doesn't really know what's going on too. And to be supported I don't think they have the right partnerships and revenues for their use or from what they are taking from the land and they don't have any revenue sharing agreements. Maybe there will be nothing left by the time we get to a revenue sharing agreement.

From ongoing forest harvesting there is an imperative to get involved somehow with the forestry occurring on our territory whether it's negotiating for an impacts and benefits agreement; or calling for a moratorium on all industrial activity in the territory until we have completed a land use plan with our community; or to unite behind our

leadership in enforcing our sovereignty and rights over our traditional territory in whatever ways are necessary. We have been lying dormant for so long that it is time to start taking more proactive approaches in protecting our territory from development that does not seek our free prior and informed consent. We need to decide what sustainable development looks like and if it will take place on our territory, for we are the people that will remain after the development is over.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Cree forest sustainability was characterized thru the following areas: values, contemporary land use, community management mechanisms and forest management issues. Cree values were the foundation for Cree contemporary land use and result in community management mechanisms to work on forest management issues. All of these areas were interconnected in forming a collective snapshot of contemporary and future decisions and past and present experiences of today's Cree livelihood. Ultimately, if we want a forest that can sustain us we need to continue to be on the land in ways that reflect our values and continue to protect the land from any industry that threatens our present and future use of it.

Forest sustainability needs to be rooted in values that reflect a Cree worldview of the land and waters, where everything is connected. If one part of the homeland is impacted it will eventually ripple throughout the homeland. Our homeland is integral to teaching present and future generations what it means to be a good Cree person and a fundamental part of this is having respect for all living entities and the land and

waters that they inhabit and showing respect thru responsible behaviour when on the land and water. A majority of teachings about Cree identity and heritage are done on the land, it is the best classroom for learning from someone about various practices and harvests. Without the land it would be next to impossible to teach and practice and remember how to do something because you have not done it with your hands and you have not seen it happen. Another tenet of responsibility that also applies to forest sustainability is awareness and safety when on the land and water. Continuing forest sustainability entails continuing to use the land and not to adhere to the mainstream notion that for a forest to be valuable it has to be cut or conserved and protected by parks.

The Contemporary Land Use chapter highlighted the *Ehlileweuk* continued land use throughout changing seasons and how things have changed and remained over time. One of the most important times of the year for my family is the spring Canada Goose harvest where we make *nemestake*. The important harvesting of waterfowl has resulted in the local schools closing down for hunt breaks during the spring and fall so that students can go hunting without missing too much school. Today we still heavily rely on trees when we are on the land for heat, cooking, smoking meat, tanning hides and building materials. Selective tree harvesting still a process practiced today.

The emergence of new technologies has resulted in some new land uses and roles that trees are beginning to fill such as an emerging firewood economy, and quicker, bigger ways of getting to camps and harvesting areas and different

communication camp methods from trail radios to satellite phones. These new technologies are blessings in some ways they make life easier when in the bush, inversely these technologies can catalyze the loss of values by harvesting more animals than you need (with huge freezer chests in most homes for storage of harvested food and in some cases people throwing out their old frozen meat at the dump) and overharvesting of trees (a furbear's habitat to a trapper) from someone's trap line as Lillian Trapper highlighted in this section. Future practices hinge on many factors such as land protection, resource development, Cree language loss, increased food and fuel costs and decreasing summer water levels.

With growing industrial and provincial interest in the territory a community management mechanism was established, the *Kichi Sahkahikun* Cree Harvesters created awareness on how close 'development' was getting to the community and to document their elders' knowledge on the territory and to educate the community on *Ehllileweuk* historical presence in parts of the territory. A spinoff of this group was created that had more of an industrial issues agenda, since industry funded a Lands and Resources department housed within Moose Cree First Nation administration's office and staff to work on issues that they deemed important. The Lands and Resources Secretariat formed with some of the Cree Harvesters members and were given a crash course in how much resources and power the province and industry holds, yet this fuelled their goal of further educating the public on resource development plans in the territory and getting them more involved in such plans. In

some ways, their efforts have succeeded in creating more consciousness about the territory and the industrial economy's impact on our land use practices.

Highlighted community management mechanisms were created to deal with forest management issues and territory resource pressures created by the province and industry. Both big players in the territory cause issues related to increased access to territory, southern decision making locations, an unilateral consultation process and an unilateral decision making and conflict resolution structure. Industry practices could leave devastating impacts on both terrestrial and aquatic environments.

Aquatically, water turbidity could increase from more runoff and erosion from the land into the water. Terrestrially, habitat would be lost and soil water retention would decrease. One last observation is that not all of the trees that are cut are used, often there are some that are left in piles where they were cut.

Pressures associated with development ranged from pressure from the province and industry to work together on forest management plans to pressure from community members to ensure their trap lines and harvesting grounds are protected to a global pressure on our resources. Through pressure to 'develop' our resources community forestry has been researched as a potential project for the First Nation to lead where several community issues could be addressed: employment and training, exerting control over the territory and shifting forestry priorities to more closely align with our own. Creating a community forestry plan comes with a few challenges. The first is that from centuries of colonization our own people do not think we are capable of writing our own forestry plan. Resource extraction and exploration still continues

in the southern part of the territory and again when people think of the future they struggle with the balance between their values and economic values.

Pursuing a community led forestry project provides many opportunities if there is commitment from the community to complete training and base their work from people who know how to responsibly work in the bush. Politically our leaders need to take a stand and stick to their *Ehlileweuk* values, yet like the dwindling quality of the southern part of the territory, our values are dwindling too. If our forestry project is going to best reflect our values we need to have people that know those areas best on the ground helping to plan and carrying out the plan. Another challenge that came up was whose laws would the forestry project fall under, the laws that the Creator gave us, or the provincial ministries? Regardless of the forestry project the impacts need to be minimal on the ground where most of the harvesting is done by manual labour and less machines are used that make huge tracks and imprints on the land. The last major issue that came up was community consultation and the challenges, rightfully based on previous consultations.

This work described the challenges, threats, opportunities and resilience of the *Ehlileweuk* connection to their ancestral and contemporary harvesting territories. Finishing making *nemestake* this spring highlighted the importance of keeping this connection to the land, to my identity. As we were packing up our *nemestakes* to come home from our spring hunt, I realized that if I lost *nemestake* I will no longer be hunting and sustaining my health and identity. If the geese bypassed us or if they did not migrate at all that would be devastating to my community and families. I tasted

nemestake a couple of weeks ago and I could not imagine a spring without it. The future and sustainability of the Moose Cree territory and *Ehlileweuk* are intertwined and this needs to be a priority for our leadership and community in deciding on any projects dealing with the water, land, air, animals, birds and fish. There is much work to be done by our people, to ensure our territorial rights and lands are protected.

In conclusion, venturing and operating a community forestry project will take better communication between the managing Moose Cree body and Moose Cree citizens. Thorough vegetation and animal inventories need to be completed for family harvesting grounds and the rest of the homelands so we can base our decisions on information that we collected. Harvesting and road plans need to be made available soon for the community to review. Also reports on how much trees have been harvested and what products they were made into need to be presented and available to the community. Overall, Moose Cree First Nation needs to work on a strategic plan for the future of their homelands and in this plan they need to figure out the role (if any) of community forestry, other resource development and ways to sustain and strengthen their culture.

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