



# Eeyou Marine Region Land Use Planning Values, Issues, and Visions

Report on community input on land use planning goals for the  
Eeyou Marine Region

EASTMAIN  
Compiled by the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission  
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## 1. Introduction

The Cree of Eeyou Istchee have occupied and cared for the coastal regions identified in the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claim Agreement (EMRLCA) for millennia. The EMRLCA is a result of several decades of intermittent negotiations between the Crees and Canada which began in the 1970s alongside the negotiations that resulted in the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA).

These negotiations eventually led to the signing of the EMRLCA (a modern treaty) which came into effect on February 15, 2012. The EMRLCA covers approximately 61 270 square kilometers of James Bay and south eastern Hudson Bay off the coast of Quebec (see Figure 1), the northern part of which is also subject to an overlap agreement with the Inuit of Nunavik, and all of which is situated in the territory of Nunavut (See Figure 2).

The EMRLCA provides for the creation of an independent body responsible for the development of a land use plan for the Eeyou Marine Region, called the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission or EMRPC. According to the agreement, the purpose of this land use plan will be to:

*protect and promote the existing and future well-being of residents of the EMR and of the coastal Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee taking into account the interests of all Canadians, and to protect, and where necessary, to restore the environmental integrity of the EMR.*

During the summer of 2018, community consultations were held by EMRPC staff in each of the coastal Cree communities to gather input to contribute to the development of a land use plan for the Eeyou Marine Region.

This report provides a summary of consultations that were held between June 18 and 21, 2018 with Eastmain Cree people including representatives of local government, youth, elders, women, tallymen and land users to hear from them:

- what is important to them about the marine area,
- what issues exist in the marine area, and
- what is their vision of their future of the marine area?

These conversations will help define the goals for land use planning in the Eeyou Marine Region and are described in this report.

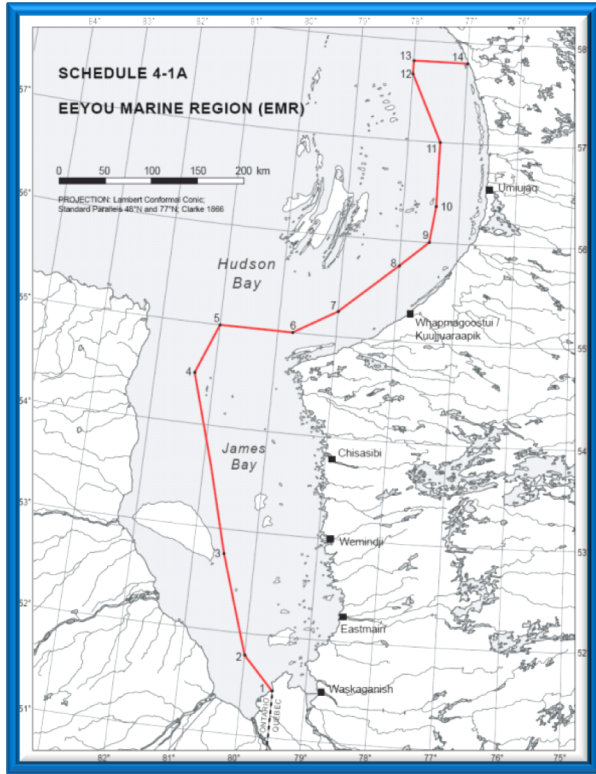


Figure 1. Eeyou Marine Region

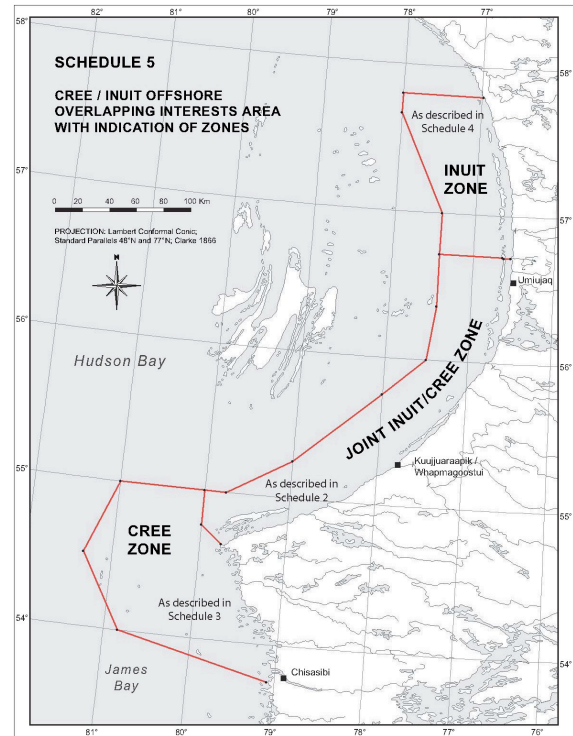


Figure 2. Cree/Inuit Offshore Overlapping Interests Area with Indication of Zones

### 1.1. Background On EMRPC

The EMRPC is an independent body responsible for developing a land use plan to guide development and conservation in the Eeyou Marine Region. The EMRPC is currently made up of two commissioners nominated by the Grand Council of the Crees (GCC), one nominated by the government of Canada and one nominated by the government of Nunavut. The commission also includes a chairperson nominated by the other commissioners.

At the time of the community consultations the EMRPC included:

- Chairperson: Tina Petawabano
- Cree Nominee: Chris Beck
- Cree Nominee: Chantal Otter Tetreault
- Canada Nominee: Lorne McNeice
- Nunavut Nominee: David Alagalak

### 1.2. Land Use Planning in the Eeyou Marine Region

Put simply, land use planning is a process of gathering and analyzing information about an area to develop goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

According to the EMRLCA:

*The purpose of a land use plan shall be to protect and promote the existing and future well-being of residents of the EMR and of the coastal Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee taking into account the interests of all Canadians, and to protect, and where necessary, to restore the environmental integrity of the EMR.*

The EMRPC land use planning process will involve several stages as described in Figure 3. During the summer of 2018, community consultations were held in each of the coastal Cree communities to gather input to contribute to the development of a land use plan for the Eeyou Marine Region. These consultations will contribute to the development of goals and objectives for the plan and guide research and analysis processes that will lead to the development of a draft land use plan. The draft land use plan will go through a public hearing process before it is approved.

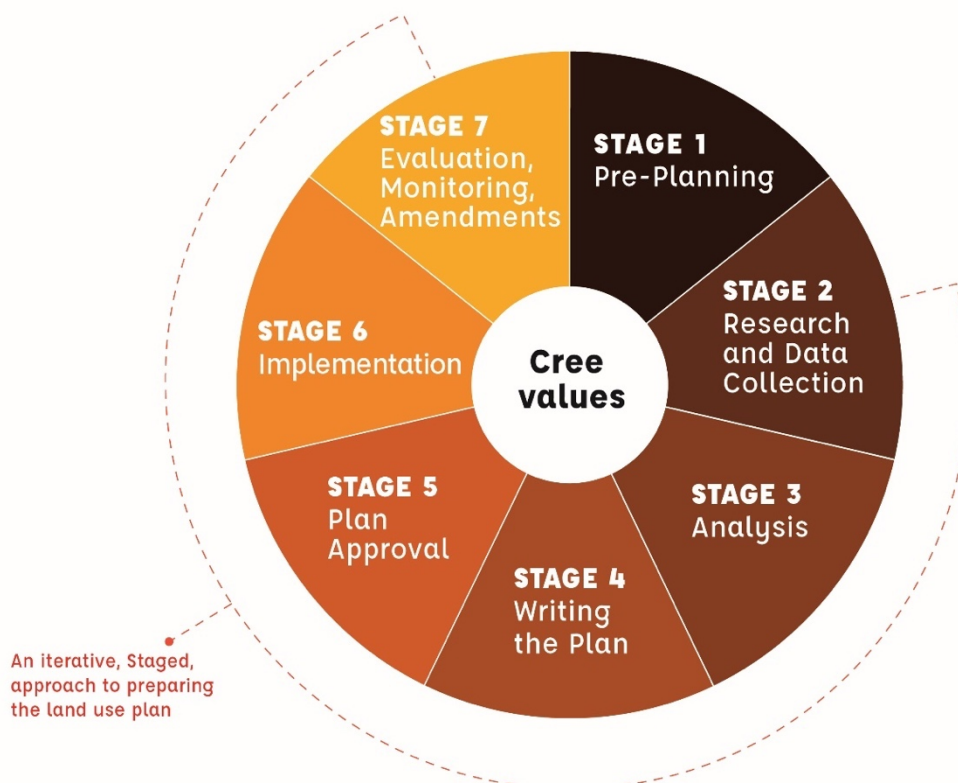


Figure 3. Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission Planning Stages





## 2. On the EMRPC Community Consultations

The following section provides a summary of the objectives and processes for the community consultations that were undertaken in each of the coastal communities over the summer of 2018.

### 2.1. Objectives of community consultations

The objectives of the community consultations were:

- To build awareness and community engagement in EMR planning process
  - Increase community understanding of EMRPC role and the EMR planning process
  - Build relationships with key planning partners within the communities
- To gather input to contribute to the development of goals, objectives, and measures of success for the marine area land use plan
  - Acknowledge and verify existing information on Cree values, issues and visions related to the marine area
  - Gather information on community values, issues, and visions for the EMR

## 2.2. Community Consultation Details

The community consultations were held in Eastmain between June 18 and 21, 2018. The EMRPC relied on assistance from the Eeyou Planning Commission commissioner Raymond Shanoush to assist with the planning and coordination of community consultations. The consultations also relied on a team of individuals including translators and notetakers.

The team members who were involved in organizing and leading the community consultations in Eastmain are:

- Tina Petawabano – EMRPC Chairperson
- Frances Dietrich-O’Connor – EMRPC Planner/Researcher
- Merlin Whiskeychan – Eeyou Planning Commission Land Use Planning Officer
- Raymond Shanoush – Eastmain Eeyou Planning Commission Commissioner
- Eva Louttit – Notetaker

The Eastmain community consultations involved meetings with each of the following groups:

- Eastmain Workers
- Elders
- Tallymen and land users
- Women
- Youth

The EMRPC also hosted a feast that was open to all community members. During the consultations, the EMRPC team held a terminology workshop to develop Cree translations of some key planning terms. A summary of what was shared at these meetings is provided in the following sections. The sessions were promoted on Facebook and local radio. See Appendix A for the poster developed to promote the consultations.





Figure 4. Photo from Eastmain women's meeting

### 3. Values

During the consultations, the participants were asked to share what they valued about the marine part of their territory. In the land use planning process, it is important to understand what is important to Cree people about the marine region to ensure that these things are protected or supported by the land use plan. The following section provides a summary of the comments that Eastmain Cree shared about what they value in about the Marine area.

#### 3.1. Wildlife

When asked about what they value about the marine area, Eastmain Cree spoke about the importance of wildlife. In particular, people spoke about the importance of caribou, beluga, seal and migrating birds.

*"I love the area, and all the wildlife. We need to make sure to protect them."*

*"I value the marine life. Even on the small islands you can see caribou prints. There's lots of caribou, beluga, seal, and migrating birds. There's also a camp owned by the community for smoking fish."*

### 3.2. Harvesting

Eastmain community members spoke about the importance of harvesting in the marine area. People spoke about harvesting fish, waterfowl, berries, driftwood, and eggs. Eastmain Cree shared that in the past the area was used for different purposes in all four seasons.

*“Waterfowl are very important to users of the marine area.”*

*“In the past, many people used the islands to harvest eggs these days you will still see some people that do that.”*

*“The islands are used for blueberry picking, gathering driftwood, goose, and fishing.”*

*“There were many main spring fish camps on the bay. We used the area in all four seasons, after the goose hunt, next was summer fish camps.”*

### 3.3. Cree knowledge

Another theme that emerged from the consultations was the importance of Cree knowledge and traditions. For example, some people spoke about the importance of Cree hunting practices and the importance of learning through observation. One community member also spoke about the healing power of the land and waters.

*“I value our traditional hunting practices. There are areas where the geese feed and hunters do not hunt there. But we have fly-by shooting areas where geese are flying from their feeding areas.”*

*“I love being on the land with my family. I learned knowledge of travel in winter and summer when I was young by observing my family.”*

*“The land is healing for those troubled in spirit.”*

### 3.4. History

Several participants shared that the use of the marine area has changed significantly since hydroelectric developments in the region and that while, in the past, the area was heavily used by the community, since the diversion there is less use of the marine area by Eastmain Cree. These changes will be discussed further in Section 4.0 below.

*“We have to keep in mind that there’s a big difference from what used to be before the Eastmain diversion. Now there are less users than back then. The majority of people used to use the land year-round from the Jack River area up to the Old Factory region.”*

*“The value about the marine area used to be the long time ago, but not anymore because of the changes we have seen.”*

That being said, Eastmain Cree still value the area because of the historic significance to their community and hopes for potential future use of the area. Some examples of the historic significance of the marine area shared by Eastmain Cree include: graves, historic gathering places, the Inuit village at Cape Hope Island.

*“Cape Hope Island used to have an Inuit village. There were 6-7 dwellings. The people living there were ship builders. You can see the remains of the houses. This might be a place to take tourists. The island itself is significant.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“There are many important places out there. For example, graves and places we used to go and gather in different seasons.”*

Participants also shared stories about the importance of historic harvesting of seals to feed dog teams.

*“In the past when dog sleds were used, we went out on the bay for seal hunt to use as dog food.”*

### 3.5. Tourism

Several Eastmain Cree also spoke about the importance of the marine area because of the tourism potential in the area. They also expressed that they value the opportunity that tourism offers to preserve Cree knowledge and stories about the marine area and share that knowledge with visitors.

*“Tourism is very important to us. I would like to see us maximizing tourism activities while still protecting the environment.”*

*“In the past, people used those islands to harvest migrating birds but today’s generation people don’t occupy those islands for same purposes. Some knowledge still remains with active users but there are few of them. Tourism is an important way for us to retain that knowledge from our elder users of the bay.”*

*“I did a study of Cree names, stories, events in the marine area. Many stories that relate to those locations may seem far from here as far as 70 kilometers or 20-30 nautical miles from here. Tourism is a way to preserve and share these stories with the outside world.”*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://pubs.aina.ucalgary.ca/arctic/Arctic36-2-214.pdf>

## 4. Issues

During the community consultations, the participants were asked to share any issues that related to the marine area that the EMRPC needs to be aware of in developing the land use plan for the EMR. The following section provides a summary of the issues expressed by the participants. Some of the changes that people spoke about are localized in the marine area while others related to Eeyou Istchee overall but are nonetheless relevant to the marine region planning work.

### 4.1. Changes to Water Flow, Level, and Quality

Several participants spoke about changes that they have observed to the marine area. In particular, they spoke about changes to water levels and water flow. Several Eastmain Cree shared their belief that the changes were caused by hydroelectric developments in the region. Between 1971-1984, Hydro Quebec built three hydroelectric power stations on the La Grande river. This project involved construction of over 200 structures to alter the courses of 19 waterways. Three rivers, the Eastmain, Opinaca, and Caniapiscau were diverted to reservoirs on the La Grande River. The changes that people have observed since the James Bay project have impacted many aspects of the Cree way of life. One community member shared that they believe that inland forest fires have contributed to lower water levels on the coast.

*“Before the diversions, the flow of the river was strong enough that it kept salt water out of the river. Now the tide goes up to the first rapids. That’s why we had to put in a new water treatment plant.”*

*“Once I sat with the late John Mayappo watching the river break up; he said that one day I would see an island there. Today there is an island there because the water levels are so low now. Long ago, fresh water extended five miles out into the bay; now, salt water extends far upriver.”*

*“Some islands had markers, there were certain sand bars we had to avoid. Now that sand may already be attached to an island. Someone working for hydro was preparing a study to compare water levels before and after the diversion.”*

*“The Eastmain River was very clean and pure before; is not like this today. For it to revive and renew will take a long time. We do not know if animals and waterfowl are diseased because of contamination of land. We are all unwell because of the effects of the hydro dams.”*

*“We have no water because of the forest fire; it seeps underground, does not flow anywhere.”*

Several people shared concerns that some creeks and lakes have started turning black and because of these changes they need to find a new place to get fresh water.

*“The water has changed. Creeks and lakes are black and yet we are expected to drink it. It is filtered and comes out as white water. What has been put in it to make it look like that?”*

*“It doesn’t make sense to replace something that has been gone for a long time. The things we value they’re all gone. We can’t replace them. You can’t replace the things already destroyed by dams. Even water we don’t have water. The creeks are turning black (KM 381). We’re looking for another place to get water.”*

One individual shared that they have concerns about graves being unearthed by changing water levels.

*“You should talk to people who travel up and down the coast. I’ve read about graves being carried up on the tide. Then people need to clean up after spring break and bury them again.”*

#### 4.2. Changes to Animals and Animal Habitat

Eastmain Cree also spoke about many changes to animals and animal habitat that they have observed in the marine area. In particular, people shared stories about changes they have observed to geese, fish, moose, and beaver because of changes to water quality and levels. One change that several Eastmain Cree spoke about is changes to the taste of fish animals.

*“Fish do not taste the same anymore since the diversion and damming of the river.”*

*“Even if we say we value this or that there’s nothing we can do to change it. We’ve seen what was good in the past destroyed. A lot of things were destroyed when hydro came. We get lots of rain in the fall. The water level goes up, the beavers build their houses. When it starts to freeze, the beaver houses end up on shore and the beavers freeze in their huts and the foxes enjoy them.”*

*“Moose are affected, for example, white spots have been detected on their livers. What we value is all gone now, it has been destroyed by Hydro Quebec.”*

Many Eastmain Cree also spoke about rapid changes in geese populations in the area. People shared that geese appear skinnier and that they leave earlier in the season than they did in the past. Many people felt that the loss of eelgrass was an important factor in the changes to bird health and habits. Several Eastmain Cree also spoke about changes to the timing of bird migrations with birds flying south earlier in the fall.

*“Before the diversion there were lots of snow geese south and north of Eastmain. Over time, we have seen a rapid depletion of snow geese.”*

*“My biggest concern is the alterations, we have seen many changes including the loss of the eelgrass. Hydro doesn’t want to admit that these changes are because of their project and other hydro projects in Manitoba.”*

*“I have seen what was good in the past and what is not good now. Now, the geese are skinny in the fall. What they used to eat during fall migration is no longer there (eel grass). The waterfowl all leave early, there is nothing to value anymore.”*

*“The geese won’t make it down south. The food is all gone. The eelgrass there is lots out in the bay but no more along the shore so the birds have nothing to eat. We used to go hunting in the bay but people don’t go out anymore. The birds leave early now. We used to go hunting in mid-October. Now they leave in mid-September.”*

*“The geese do not really go along the shoreline to feed because there is too much other growth but not what they eat (eelgrass).”*

The community members also spoke about new species that they have seen in the area. One example is the cormorant that they have witnessed eating many species of fish. Eastmain Cree also spoke about seeing increased populations of other new species in the area including green crab, bald eagles, vultures, cranes, “jellyfish-like” species and Greenland shark.

*“There are new waterfowl. For example, there are too many kaahkaachiiship (cormorant) and they eat many species of fish.”*

*“There are many, many new species showing up: bald eagle, vulture, crane, Greenland shark.”*

*“There is a crab that causes a lot of damage to eel grass. Last spring there was an accident in Chisasibi two people died going through the ice. Divers went into the area and were able to recover one body but not the second. The divers explained that there was a hole under the water where the accident happened. The diver asked the local guys ‘do you harvest crabs because there’s tons of crab down there’. My uncle said maybe that’s one of the major issues of the coast of James Bay not having eel grass.”*

*“There are some invasive species such as green crabs that are very invasive and have no natural predators. They area effecting the eelgrass.”*

*“I watched a show called the “The Living Beach.” It showed how green crab eat eel grass and krill. The migratory birds feed on the krill because no more eel grass here and there’s not much krill and therefore no more shore birds anymore; not like in the past when the shore birds were plentiful.”*



*“Up near Whapmagoostui, we thought we saw a killer whale but we didn’t report it because we weren’t 100 percent certain.”*

*“Three summers ago, when I was at a fish camp, there were a lot of “jellyfish-like” things in the water close to the shore; this was near Conn River.”*

#### 4.3. Impacts to Harvesting

The participants also shared comments about how changes to the land and waters in the marine area have impacted their harvesting. For example, some community members shared that changes to water quality and level have impacted their ability to fish and the success of their fishing efforts.

*“Long ago, nets left in water did not get dirty. Today, a net cannot be left even for only one day before it gets very dirty. Sometimes, we have to switch nets more than once a day. And we don’t catch as many fish today as long ago. We cannot set nets along the shore as before; sometimes the nets sit on the shore because of water level.”*

*“The use of fish has changed. Long ago, dried fish were used make pemmican, but fish are not smoked too much anymore. In the past, we caught many smaller fish (nuutimiiwaashiishich - cisco) in the summer and fall; but not today. Many places where we set nets before are too dry now.”*

*“Especially on the south side of the Eastmain river there is less gillnet fishing now. Young people will go out and do rod fishing.”*

Eastmain Cree also spoke about many changes they have witnessed to waterfowl and waterfowl habitat in the area and how these changes have impacted their harvests. One community member spoke about an outfitting camp that used to take users out to the islands. This community member shared that they believe that changes in water levels resulted in the closure of this outfitting camp.

*“We have seen many changes to the land and environment. The waterfowl do not stay, they just hatch chicks and leave therefore the hunt is decreasing.”*

*“There used to be an outfitting camp on the Jack River, and they would use the islands nearby but it’s no longer active. We were asked about the main reason why it shut down. We believe it was because of changes to water levels.”*

Several Eastmain Cree spoke about changes they have observed to berries on the islands. They shared that, in the past, berry harvesting was one of the main activities that people practiced on the islands but that there are many berries that no longer grow on the islands.

*“Many kinds of berries do not grow anymore.”*

*“We have seen less growth of berries. One of the main activities we did on the island in the past was berry picking, we don’t see that anymore.”*

#### 4.4. Navigation challenges

One issue that several Eastmain Cree spoke about is increased difficulties with accessing the marine region. People shared that travel by boat is more difficult now and requires frequent boat repairs. People also shared that, spring use of the bay is much more difficult so many people have to use helicopters to access the bay. People shared that they believe climate change and the diversions were some of the main causes of these navigation challenges. Eastmain Cree also spoke about changes to travel conditions in the winter time and shared that some areas no longer freeze and are therefore not passable in the winter time.

*“Since the diversions spring use of the bay is much harder so there are many helicopters flying around the bay.”*

*“Float planes cannot land here anymore to fly trappers inland to their traplines in the fall and they cannot use the river either to travel by boat upriver.”*

*“There was an equipment subsidy from CTA for boat and engines. There has been an increase in costs of motor and boats repairs because those drivers do not know river conditions (e.g. location of sandbars and shallows).”*

*“Climate change has changed the quality and condition of the ice compared to 10-20 years ago, the thickness not the same. It is not solid when people travel by skidoo. Some areas don’t freeze and there are open waters during the winter.”*

#### 4.5. Contamination

Several community members shared concerns related to potentially contaminated areas within the marine area. This included mention of old army bases and empty oil and gas drums left upstream that could burst and flow into the marine area. Eastmain Cree also shared concerns about camps not disposing of their garbage properly.

*“Hydro Quebec left behind empty oil and gas drums underground.”*

*“At Cold Water Lake they left drums along areas. Some were never picked up. What happens if these things bust? They rust and will eventually break. That will flow into the marine area.”*

*“I was raised up north. I remember there was an army base there on my grandfather’s trapline. Was the land cleaned up there after? There were oil and gas drums buried*

*underground; many families raised their families there. People wondered why there were so many illnesses among families who were there (e.g. cancer). Could this have been the effect of what was left behind?"*

*"Some camps don't take care of disposal of garbage then we hear of bears going there."*

One community member spoke about the potential for contamination from boats that have not been properly sterilized and shared concerns that people may not be sufficiently educated about proper boat sterilization requirements.

*"There are possible concerns that boats that are not sterilized properly could cause contamination. CNG introduced systems to clean boats but I'm not sure if it is a requirement and I don't think that many people are educated on that."*

The community members also spoke about barges that have sunk in the marine region and may be contaminating the area. The participants mentioned that one of the historic accidents involved Moosonee Transport.

*"A barge pulled by a tug boat capsized. The boat was carrying the annual shipment of fuel and goods. It capsized near Cape Jones not long ago, less than 10 years ago. It was travelling from Wemindji to Whapmagoostui. There was another boat that went down from Moose Factory. It was a Moosonee Transportation Limited boat."*

#### 4.6. Changes to Cree Way of Life

During the consultations, people spoke about concerns that the Cree way of life and traditions have started to change. Some issues people spoke about include less use of the land, conflicts around hunting areas, and less understanding and respect for conservation. People were also concerned that proper land management and harvesting practices may not be being passed down to younger generations.

*"I learned knowledge of travel in winter and summer by observation when I was young. It is not this way anymore; families do not go out together anymore."*

*"Youth do not travel by boat anymore. They have easy access to other communities by the road/highway. For spring travel (goose hunt), they go by ski-doo to camps and return by chopper when the river is open."*

*"There are less users on the land than back then. It's more of a safety issue. Elders are not able to mobilize themselves towards the shoreline to teach and have young people experience activities they went through back then."*

*“Asking about boundaries shows a change to Cree society.”*

*“There’s some people that don’t have an area they can go for hunting.”*

*“Some tallymen refuse people into their trapline because sometimes people don’t know the meaning of conservation.”*

#### 4.7. Safety

Several participants spoke about safety concerns in the bay. Eastmain Cree spoke shared that, since the diversion, people have to travel farther out because it is too dry to travel close to the shore which can be more dangerous. People also spoke about how, in the past, land users learned about safe travel by observing while travelling with knowledgeable users however since the diversions knowledgeable land users are concerned that routes that they used to use are no longer safe.

*“Because of changes since the diversion there are some issues around safe travel. People can’t go along the shore anymore, it’s too dry since diversion and dam so people have to travel further out when going on river anywhere or to their camps. In the past, we learned about travel on the river and bay through observation with men knowledgeable about routes. Because of these changes, it is hard for people to learn about safe travel on the bay anymore. It is harder to read signs in the sky indicating changes in the weather that affect river conditions. The water is shallow now. if you do not know about conditions beneath the water, it could break the motor or boat.”*

*“There are not many people going out to the islands further out in the bay because of bad experiences on trips to Walrus Island. The water used to be high at those places where our fish camps were, now it’s low.”*

*“Tides on the coast are a lot drier than before. From 1975, since diversion we’ve seen change in the tides. Tallymen worry that the usual channels off shore have dried up now more giving caution to users of islands and travel routes. They fear that the can no longer use the channels they would always follow.”*

#### 4.8. Jurisdiction

One tallyman raised concerns about jurisdiction and hunting rights. This tallyman shared that Quebec hunters are travelling on Category III land through his trapline and hunting along the coast on Category II land.

*“Quebec is trying to claim part of category two land along the coast. Quebec hunters are travelling to the coast on category three land and then going hunting along the coast on category two land on my trapline.”*

## 5. Vision

During the consultations, the community members were asked to share how they envisioned the future of the marine area. To help community members answer this question, it was often worded as, “what would you to see in the marine area in 20-25 years?” The following section provides a summary of the visions for the marine area that Eastmain Cree shared during the consultations.

### 5.1. Protecting the marine area

There is a strong desire among Eastmain Cree to see the marine area protected for future generations. Of particular importance was the protection of water, bird feeding and resting areas and fish spawning grounds.

*“I want to see clean environment in the future for my daughter”*

*“I love the environment. I want to protect the wildlife. In the future, I want to see healthy polar bears and belugas.”*

*“I want to see protection of the environment, spawning grounds on the river and conservation/sanctuary (feeding grounds) for geese.”*

*“I want to see us protect the birds we harvest and especially protect bird feeding and resting grounds.”*

*“We need to protect the fish spawning grounds on the river and streams.”*

*“We need to protect the water. If we don’t, it alters the hunting and fishing.”*

People also spoke about a number of important cultural areas that need to be protected including burial sites and Charlton Island.

*“I want to see respect for burial sites along the coast.”*

*“I know there are some key islands that need to be protected such as Charlton island”*

### 5.2. No contamination

Several Eastmain Cree shared that they would like to see strong regulations to ensure that the lands and the waters in the marine area are well protected with strong collaboration between different jurisdictions to ensure that the regulations are followed. People also shared that they would like to see protocols created to address waste disposal on the islands and a clear process for what to do if any spills occur in the marine region.

*“It is time to protect the environment; not to contaminate the land or water.”*

*“I would like to see environmental restrictions in place; by-laws or regulations and strong cooperation between the Crees and Canada. We need to preserve what we have now; for it not to get worse.”*

*“We need monitoring and education processes for what to do if there’s a spill.”*

*“We need a protocol to address disposal on the islands.”*

### 5.3. Restricting Development

For some Eastmain Cree, protecting the marine area means restricting development in the area. Community members expressed a desire to not see developments such as pipelines, oil drilling or mining in the marine area. The desire to restrict these types of developments was related to concerns about potential impacts to the lands, waters and Cree way of life. One community member acknowledged that while they do not want these types of developments now, they would like to gain a better understanding of development potential in the area to be able to make proactive and better-informed decisions going forward.

*“I don’t want to see any oil drilling or mining. In 25 years, want to be able to swim and put my feet in the water and for it to be clean.”*

*“I don’t want to see any pipelines. I want to see us protect the area for what we use it for. I don’t want to see any natural gas developments without knowing the impacts of it.”*

*“There is a ridge on north side of Eastmain where there’s a large crack. At times, you can smell petroleum. The tallyman wanted us to study it, maybe we will in the future. But he didn’t want any activity of that nature because of hunting grounds and water flow.”*

### 5.4. Community infrastructure and economic development

Eastmain Cree recognize however that some community goals may require developments in the marine area. The participants shared several community infrastructure and economic development plans that may involve alterations to the marine area. These potential developments are described below. Eastmain Cree spoke about the importance of making careful proactive decisions about the future of the area.

*“It is important to decide what and how the marine region and islands can be used for; we must think about our children and future generations. There is much to think about”*



#### 5.4.1. Energy Generation Projects

Eastmain Cree spoke about plans to explore renewable energy projects such as wind power or tidal energy production in the marine region such. They shared that Eeyou Power Corporation identified two specific islands on the coast that may be viable locations for wind power projects. They shared however, that these locations are environmentally and culturally significant so they expect that such a development would require approval by the Grand Council of the Crees before it would be permitted to move forward.

*“It hasn’t moved forward yet, but we were considering working with Eeyou Power Corp. and developing wind power. There were two locations thought to be viable on the coast. But the locations proposed (Cape Hope Island and High Rock) are important locations for us so we’re not sure if it could go ahead. There would need to be a majority vote at Council Board for something like that to go forward.”*

*“We had discussion about wind power on some islands but the concern was about potential impacts to waterflow and that the noise might affect water mammals.”*

*“We recognize that we may need to start replacing the energy from the dams with our own Cree energy production. We could look into things like wind turbines out in the bay or tidal energy production.”*

#### 5.4.2. Commercial harvesting

Several community members expressed an interest in exploring the potential for commercial fishing or aquaculture in the marine area. In particular, people spoke about exploring the potential of harvesting lobster, shrimp, clams, and mussels commercially. People also expressed an interest in exploring aquaculture programs for sturgeon.

*“One idea that we had was to have a fish farm, maybe sturgeon and sell the fish. More research needs to be done to see if this is a viable, project. I would like to see a study on what kind and how many fish are caught in nets.”*

*“A few years ago, there was an airline pilot from Moosonee who sure there was potential for commercial lobster harvesting in James Bay. It would be interesting to explore that. Although I believe all of Hudson Bay is closed to commercial fishing.”*

*“Perhaps we could create a fishing industry to do fish farming and commercial fishing for crab or shrimp. There may be potential for trade with Japan.”*

*“I was interested in exploring the possibility of a sturgeon farm. It would likely be located on land to avoid contaminating the wild fish. With something like that, we could push Cree branding. We could also explore farming clams or mussels. We would need to do it in an area out in the bay that’s away from contamination.”*

People shared that more research would need to be conducted to determine if these projects would be viable. Eastmain Cree also shared that a number of studies have been conducted on fish in the area including deep fishing studies conducted by DFO in the 1980s and fish studies completed by Laval University in the 1970s.

*“Commercial fishing is a hot topic but we don’t know enough about the fish population. A thorough study would need to be done.”*

*“There were deep fishing studies done by Rick Baxter and DFO around the 1980s. They were studying the coast. They took studies of whitefish, cisco, trout, and walleye.”*

*“There were fish studies done by Rod Morin from Laval University, in early to mid-70’s, along the coast up to Ispisaakaau. They studied many types of fish (whitefish, cisco etc.); took samples of brains, stomach, gonads, scales, determined sex of fish).”*

One community member shared that they are interested in exploring the potential of harvesting invasive species such as green crabs through a stewardship program or to sell commercially.

*“There are some invasive species such as green crabs that are very invasive and have no natural predators. They are affecting the eelgrass. Perhaps we could harvest them to sell commercially or create a stewardship program to catch and freeze them.”*

Eastmain Cree also spoke about the potential for commercial harvesting of dulse and bird feathers.

*“We started looking into the edible plants market. For example, we were considering dulse farming.”*

*“We could make good use of bird feathers outside feathers and down. They are used for blankets. Perhaps we could look at the possibility to get people to collect and manufacture feathers. The use of feathers slowly coming back.”*

#### 5.4.3. Tourism

Another important economic development initiative that many Eastmain Cree spoke about is tourism. Eastmain Cree shared that they are working to develop market ready tours to take tourists out into the marine area by boat. They shared that they are interested in taking tourists out to see wildlife. They shared that, while they do not plan to market the tours as polar bear sighting tours, on scouting trips they have had high rates of polar bear sightings. Community members also spoke about potential tours to witness the spring hunt at High Rock or a winter coastal tour near Wemindji. Eastmain Cree stressed that decisions about where to allow tourists will need to be made by community members.

*“We’re looking to develop tours to take people out in the marine area by boat. We have lots of animals: caribous, belugas, seals, migrating birds. These are the attractions we are aiming for. We’re not promoting it as a polar bear sighting trip, although the success rate for seeing polar bears when we go out is amazing. When we out on a scouting trip we saw polar bears on every trip – including on South Twin island, Weston Island and Trodley Island. We developed a tourism training program through a partnership with Arctic kingdom based in Iqaluit.”*

*“Wemindji wanted to do a coastal tour in the winter time.”*

*“We talked about the possibility of allowing tourists to witness spring hunt at High Rock. Communities are the ones that will decide where they do or not want people to go.”*

Before these tours go forward, Eastmain Cree spoke about a number of initiatives that will need to be pursued to ensure the success of the tourism initiatives including agreements with neighboring communities and purchasing of boats.

*“For the tours, we want to have an agreement with neighbouring communities about how we are going to work together on tourism. We would be interested in tours travelling from one community to another.”*

*“Right now, we are still debating what type of boats we will use for tourism. Most people enjoyed using the titans. We’re also considering a zodiac around 30 feet with fiberglass bottom.”*

### 5.5. Community infrastructure

Eastmain Cree also spoke about a number of community infrastructure projects that may have implications for the marine region. This includes the development of a marina, shore stabilization projects, dredging channels and developing infrastructure for boats to gas up.

*“We’re planning to build a marina and also planning for landscaping for shore stabilization. The marina is in early stages, we hope to be finished by next year. We plan to dredge the area. The channel between the island and the mainland is very low and difficult to cross. Because of low tides, we are building a marine docking system and will have to haul boats out.”*

*“When you think about tourism potential, there are services that we lack and would need to develop to be able to run tours such as a way to gas up when the boats are in the water.”*

### 5.6. Restore areas

Eastmain Cree are interested in seeing existing contaminated areas in the marine area cleaned up and restored to their original state. Community members also wanted to see the lands and waters restored or enhanced so that geese populations would return to historic levels. Eastmain Cree also want to see spring break up return to how it was before. Some community members expressed a sense of resignation that there is nothing that can be done to restore the lands to how they were before the diversions.

*"We need environmental clean-up. Perhaps we can build lakes where waterfowl can feast and become fattened; the original state will never be restored."*

*"I would value to get back the geese and ducks and build places where they can stay and feed."*

*"They talk about transplanting eelgrass. If it would work, I would support it. But you'd have to alter what's happening to cause the problem."*

*"I want to see the breakup that was before."*

Several Eastmain Cree spoke about wanting to see fishing camps restored and used as places to teach youth about the use of the land.

*"There were two places where we had summer camps and fishing programs one on an island, the other on the mainland. We wanted to start rebuilding them but transportation is an issue."*

*"Fishing camp areas need to be restored; is very nice to be out there. Those on Income Security cannot go to fishing camps anymore because the land is not the same as it was before. Families could go there again if areas were cleaned up and restored. Many other activities could be carried out again as before that children and youth could learn from."*

*"I know much grass is growing where the tents and teepees used to be. Now we have to erect tents on the sandy parts of the beach, near the shoreline because of overgrowth of grass, are many mosquitoes and other insects. We need to bring back the fish camps and reserve the areas where the fish camps are."*

## 5.7. Preserving and Passing Down the Cree Way of Life

Preserving and passing down the Cree way of life was important to Eastmain Cree and some community members stressed that this should be the main objective of any plans that are developed for the marine area.

*"The only thing you can plan is how do you maintain the activities of the Cree."*

*"We must hold on to our culture and traditions: hunting, trapping, fishing."*

Eastmain Cree also stressed the importance of preserving fishing sites and creating education and training programs to preserve and pass down Cree knowledge and way of life.

*“We should preserve and fix up camping sites, summer camps and note what they were used for. We should establish fishing camp programs in the summer; on the islands too.”*

*“I want younger generations to know about navigation paths and to pass that knowledge on to the younger generations. Perhaps there could be programs to support youth to go out and pursue the traditional ways.”*

*“We need more CTA funding for the studies and programs on the land that the tallymen are using. Priority should be funding for programs in each season as activities are different for each season.”*

People also spoke about the importance of using Cree place names and Cree land use guidelines.

*“We need to use the Cree names for places out there.”*

*“Each tallyman should get guideline book from CTA and follow paaschicheuchimaau (who determines where daily hunt will take place).”*

## 5.8. Safety

Eastmain community members shared a number of recommendations related to safe navigation in the marine area. One recommendation was the training of local coast guard auxiliary officers to regulate activities in the marine region. Community members recognized that this will require a boat that can safely handle large waves.

*“Eastmain is purchasing a search and rescue boat this summer. But if we were qualified and trained by the Coast Guard we could be Coast Guard auxiliary officers.”*

*“There needs to be some entity that will regulate activity on marine area e.g. coast guard.”*

*“We need a boat that can take big waves for emergency and surveillance purposes.”*

People also expressed an interest in seeing studies conducted to understand, monitor, and communicate information about the tides, water channels, and ice in the marine region. One community member suggested creating a technical weather station for the coast to track and communicate tide levels.

*“It’s harder to navigate now, I’m working on project with Canadian Hydrographic Service to create bathymetric project. They are willing to lend the equipment we just need community crew. We are trying to get funds for a crew.”*

*“The ice should be monitored and we need to study the channels.”*

*“We need a technical weather station for the coast to measure levels of the tide. This information could be passed on or communicated.”*

One community member expressed an interest in discussing the construction of bridges to allow for safe access to the coastal camps.

*“For access to the coastal area camps perhaps we need to start discussing bridges for safety reasons.”*

## 6. Eastmain Cree Planning Terminology

During the community consultations, the EMRPC team held a workshop to identify Cree translations of some key land use planning terminology. The objective of this workshop was to try to find words in the coastal Cree dialects that can be used to help people better understand land use planning, the Eeyou Marine Region, and the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement. Another goal of these workshops was to help non-Cree people begin to come to a better understanding of the Cree way of thinking about planning and land management. The workshops did not intend to identify the definitive and conclusive translations of these terms and should be considered part of a longer-term conversation.

The conversation resulted in a very valuable conversation about Cree perspectives on some key English planning terms. The Cree language experts shared that it is very difficult to translate certain terminology because they represent different worldviews.

The group spent a significant amount of time discussing the terms “plan” and “goal.” Through the discussion, Eastmain Cree stressed that if you listen to Cree elders there is only one goal: to preserve the lands and waters so that the Cree way of life can continue. One participant shared that although this term was understood differently from the way it is understood in English, Cree people did have plans. For example, they would plan for when, where, and how to hunt to ensure that they did not over harvest a particular area.

*“Back then, we used the area for hunting and fishing there was no such thing as goals. It’s the white man that sets goals. If you listen to the elders, there was only one goal: to preserve all that we can so that we can continue hunting, fishing and trapping as we have always done.”*

*“It is difficult to translate certain terminology. For example, ‘goals’ and ‘plan’ as Crees lived a very simple life long ago. Even during the time of the negotiations. The intent of*





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### 7. Dotmocracy - Ranking Planning Issues

Prior to the community consultations, the EMRPC conducted a review of past studies and consultations related to the Eeyou Marine Region. A list of the studies reviewed is provided in Appendix C. The objectives of this review were:

- To try to reduce duplication in the EMR/EMRPC consultation processes
- To ensure the EMRPC planning process built off of past studies
- To identify key themes and issues raised by previous studies

The themes identified through this review were used to conduct a dotmocracy process during the community consultations to gather a preliminary understanding of community priorities related to the key themes and issues. For this dotmocracy process, meeting participants were each given four coloured sticky dots. The key themes were explained (usually in Cree and English) and the community members were given an opportunity to place their stickers on the issues/themes that were the most important to them. The results of the dotmocracy process are displayed in Table 2.

The top issues identified through the dotmocracy process in Eastmain were:

- Restoration:
  - Work to clean up coastal areas
- Cree governance:
  - Respect and support Cree knowledge, governance, and land management practices in the marine area
- Environmental Protection:
  - Create new protected areas



Figure 5. Image of Eastmain dotmocracy exercise

Table 2. Results of Eastmain Dotmocracy Exercise

Planning Themes Identified from Past Studies	Community Feast	Tallymen	Women	Youth	Total
<b>Restoration:</b> Work to clean up coastal areas	27	7	13	0	47
<b>Cree governance:</b> Respect and support Cree knowledge, governance, and land management practices in the marine area	21	8	10	1	40
<b>Environmental protection:</b> Create new protected areas	21	10	8	1	40
<b>Access:</b> Maintain and enhance access to the marine area for hunting fishing trapping	22	7	10	0	39
<b>Environmental monitoring and management:</b>	16	3	5	1	25

Better information on what is happening on the islands and marine area					
<b>Cree led development:</b> Promote economic development that is compatible with Cree way of life	14	5	4	1	24
<b>Safety:</b> Support safe navigation in the marine area	9	6	3	0	18
<b>Climate change:</b> Understand and reduce the impacts of climate change	9	2	3	0	14
<b>Total Responses</b>	139	48	56	4	247

## 8. Questions and recommendations for the EMR and EMRPC

The following section provides a summary of questions and recommendations that were raised by Eastmain community members during the community consultations.

### 8.1. Questions raised by Eastmain community members

During the community consultations, community members raised a number of questions related to the Eeyou Marine Region. Whenever possible, answers to these questions were provided during the consultations. The EMRPC recognizes that there is still a need to build greater awareness about the EMR and the EMRLCA within the coastal communities.

These questions will be compiled with questions from the other communities and the EMRPC will develop a frequently asked questions document to respond to as many of the questions as possible.

- *What kinds of berries grow along the coast and on the islands?*
- *Do users need to follow safety rules and regulations from the province or Canada? What is the role of the coast guard?*
- *Can a non-Cree build a cabin/camp on my trapline?*
- *Do Canada’s lobster regulations still apply?”*
- *Looking at the division of ownership of water and seabed, what is left for us?*
- *Have there been any studies about what is under the water?*
- *Where the channels are shallow, is possibility to dredge and open them up again?*

### 8.2. Recommendations for EMR and EMRPC

The community members also shared a number of recommendations related to EMR and the EMRPC the planning process. These included recommendations related to the types of research that Eastmain Cree would like to see conducted.

#### 8.2.1. Recommendations for the EMR and EMRPC Planning Process

Eastmain Cree shared a number of recommendations for EMR and the EMRPC land use planning process. One suggestion was that students should be taught at schools about the EMRLCA (and other agreements). Eastmain Cree also shared that there is a need for thorough discussions to take place within and between communities in a way that allows elders to meaningfully participate. Community members also shared an interest in seeing studies of fish migration routes to assist in determining which areas need to be protected.

*“All agreements should be taught at school.”*

*“When we talk about proper usage, my concern is the elders. We have few of them that can participate. We need to have thorough discussion and gathering in each community and a major conference to assemble all the people on the coast to share their vision of what should be done. This should include a discussion of how the lands and areas were used back then and that history will give you a good idea of what dealing with now.”*

*“We need better communication of information and more notices of consultations.”*

*“One study I would like to see is about fish migration routes. It would be useful in determining what areas can be zoned as a protected area (water) or a conservation area (land).”*

#### 8.2.2. Research Recommendations

Eastmain Cree shared an interest in seeing a variety of studies conducted including studies on water and ice conditions, fish and fish habitat, and other important habitat. Community members also spoke how they feel that research should be conducted. These comments are listed below.

##### *Water and Ice Conditions*

*“I would like to see a study of how the quality of the rivers/lakes (water) is affecting everything e.g. plants, trees, animals, berries, waterfowl, land.”*

*“I would like to see annual testing and reporting on water quality entering the marine area. Would want to see tests done at the mouth of each river entering the marine area. There are lots of potential contaminants coming into the area from upstream.”*

*“I would like to see an assessment of river ice conditions for winter travel (for ice fishing); ice does not freeze as thickly as before.”*

### *Fish and Fish Habitat*

*“Fish come into the Eastmain river, and other rivers to spawn, the mouths of rivers are very dry; what effect does this have on spawning of fish? The studies could start in August, during fishing programs, when the fish run to find out more about the movement of the fish; people could go to the islands and set nets.”*

*“I would prefer to see fish studies as there are new species coming into the area e.g. many green crabs discovered in Chisasibi river; what are the new species coming in? I cannot set nets anymore; I fish with a rod; there is a lot of algae now also.”*

*“I would like to see studies to monitor the quality of fish, and to understand the impact of the low water levels on the fish.”*

### *Other habitat*

*“There should also be a study of the plants along the shoreline that small animals such as muskrat eat.”*

*“I would like to see research on what is causing the loss of berries on the islands.”*

*“I would like to see studies on both coastal and inland hunting areas (lakes, rivers, other bodies of water) because they are drying up due to the diversion of the river.”*

### *How to conduct research*

*“An ongoing theme during the consultations, studies and reports of those studies done by HQ; we have not seen those reports. We want to see the reports of any studies conducted.”*

*“These studies should make use of Donald Gilpin as he has been involved in fish studies from the time before Hydro.”*

*“In the future, we need to have Cree biologists.”*

## **9. Conclusion**

A number of main themes emerged from a review of comments shared during the community consultation sessions held in Eastmain. These topics and related descriptions, as seen below, broadly describe some of the main goals and considerations raised by Eastmain Cree during the consultations. The EMRPC land use plan may not be able to address all of the issues and goals listed below however, the EMRPC will collaborate with other jurisdictions to ensure that these key issues are appropriately considered and, where possible, incorporated into in the land use planning process.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Consultation and communication</b>	Communicate early about community consultations. Support thorough discussions about use of the marine area within and between communities in a way that allows elders to meaningfully participate.
<b>Cree governance</b>	Respect and support Cree knowledge, governance, and land management practices in the marine area
<b>Cree harvesting</b>	Protect areas of importance to Cree harvesting including fish and waterfowl habitat. Support waterfowl habitat enhancement programs.
<b>Cree knowledge, culture and way of life</b>	Ensure that Cree knowledge, culture and way of life is passed on to the next generation through programs and teachings. Support the restoration of Cree fishing camps on the islands. Use Cree place names.
<b>Economic development</b>	Consider how development in the marine region could create employment for Cree people. Consider developments such as commercial fishing, dulse harvesting, tourism. Ensure that any development that occurs respects the Cree way of life.
<b>Energy Generation</b>	Consider renewable energy projects such as wind power or tidal energy production taking into account protection of important ecological and culturally significant areas.
<b>Environmental protection</b>	Identify and protect ecologically sensitive areas including habitat for fish and waterfowl
<b>Heritage preservation</b>	Inventory and protect sites of archaeological and historical significance including Charlton island and burial sites.
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Clarify and communicate rules and regulations that need to be followed in the marine region especially related to safety, commercial fishing, non-Cree harvesting, and non-Cree cabin construction.
<b>Monitoring and Enforcement</b>	Ensure that plans include monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and management processes in case of spills or other emergencies.
<b>New Species</b>	Work to understand and mitigate impacts of new species entering the marine region including green crab, bald eagles, vultures, cranes, “jellyfish-like” species and Greenland shark. Consider stewardship programs to reduce the impacts of invasive species.
<b>Plan for future developments</b>	Plan for community infrastructure developments such as a bridges, marina, boat fueling stations, and dredging of marine channels.



<b>Research</b>	Support research projects and approaches requested by Eastmain people.
<b>Restrict Development</b>	Restrict oil or gas extraction, mining, and pipeline development.
<b>Safety</b>	Support initiatives for safety surveillance and emergency responses in the marine region. Monitor and study ice routes and water channels. Weather station to track and communicate tide levels.
<b>Tourism</b>	Support tourism in the marine region. Consider infrastructure that may be required to support tourist operations including fueling stations. Support conversations between and within communities about where and how tourism can take place.
<b>Waste management</b>	Integrate sound waste management practices into Cree life on the land and the activities of proponents. Work with other jurisdictions to protect the area from waste or other contaminants entering the area.
<b>Water</b>	Protect waters within and flowing through the region.

10. Appendix A: Poster Used to Promote Consultations



The poster features a background image of a coastal landscape with a beach, rocks, and a cloudy sky. At the top, a white bird is in flight. The main title 'Eeyou Marine Region' is in large, bold letters, with 'Eeyou' in white and 'Marine Region' in blue. Below it, the name is written in Inuktitut syllabics and 'REGION MARINE D'EEYOU'. The subtitle 'Planning Commission' is in white. Three circular inset images show a red plant, a forest, and two geese. The bottom section is split into a dark blue left side and a light blue right side.

**Eeyou Marine Region**  
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**Planning Commission**

**COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND FEAST**  
Eastmain Cultural Village  
Monday, June 18, 2018  
5:00 PM

**Help Shape the Future of the Islands and Marine Area**  
Come and help us answer:  
Where have we been?  
Where are we now?  
Where do we want to go?

 **EEYOU MARINE REGION PLANNING COMMISSION**  
COMMISSION D'AMÉNAGEMENT DE LA REGION MARINE D'EEYOU  
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Questions?: Contact your local Eeyou Planning Commission Commissioner or the Eeyou Marine Region at 819-895-2202  
<https://www.eeyoumarineregion.ca/planning-commission/>

 Find us on **facebook.**

## 11. Appendix C: List of past consultation and study reports reviewed

<b>Year</b>	<b>Consultation Process or Study</b>	<b>Led by</b>
2002	Cree Use, Management & Occupancy of the Offshore Region in Eastern James Bay & Southeastern Hudson Bay	Kreg Ettenger
2009	Eeyou Indoh-Hoh Weeshou-Wehwun Traditional Eeyou Hunting Law	Cree Trappers Association
2010	Goose Hunting and Cree Ecological Knowledge in Waskaganish and Wemindji	Cree Regional Authority and Cree Trappers Association
2011	Cree Vision of Plan Nord	Cree Nation Government
2012	Review of wildlife management issues and the environmental factors that influence them in coastal and offshore area of Eeyou Istchee, Northern Quebec	Jessica Labrecque
2014	Integrated Land and Sea Conservation Community Consultations	Deputy Grand Chief Rodney Mark
2015	Cree Regional Conservation Strategy	Cree Nation Government
2016-2017	Eeyou Istchee Tourism Association Annual Report	Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association
2017	A Conversation to Set Goals for Land Use Planning	Eeyou Planning Commission