



Gaston Cooper

Justice and Correctional Services Message from the Director Donald Nicholls

It is my pleasure to report once again to the Cree Nation concerning the activities and progress of the Department of Justice and Correctional Services over the past year. There have been some key developments during this time that have continued to build depth and a foundation for success for the Cree Justice and Corrections Systems.

Consistent with the vision to first build facilities to house Cree personnel and programs, we have successfully opened new justice facilities in Waswanipi, Ujé-Bougoumou, Chisasibi, Wemindji and Waskaganish. These buildings are a valued community-based resource from which we can build greater programs and services, and incorporate local values, ways and understandings into the administration of justice.

Over the year, the Department has also increased regional and local corrections staff, and opened a Correctional Services Office in Val-d'Or. This new office enables us to be closer to the institutions and clientele, in order to provide better support for rehabilitation and reintegration. The regional correctional services staff work with Cree clientele when they enter the system to do initial intakes, and they work with reintegration officers located in each community to prepare plans to support those individuals ready to start on a path of change upon release. Having key personnel working on case management, program development and in each community on reintegration and rehabilitation has built the structure of an integrated Cree corrections system.

Personnel within the Department have participated in training in the past year that has further enhanced their ability to be key resources within their communities. Department staff members have taken a transformative training program on conflict resolution and neutral processes when working with individuals, groups and entire communities, offered through the Canadian Centre for Conflict Resolution. Gladue training has also been provided to a number of workers whereby they will be able to produce reports for courts and the corrections systems to take into account an individual's history, culture and circumstances before key decisions are made. Also within the past year, personnel have participated in pardons training to assist those who are eligible to apply for pardons/record suspensions within the communities.

The Department looks forward to the next year, as with the addition of new coordinators and personnel in the past fiscal year, we can now further expand upon programs and services throughout the Cree Nation. The Department will also partner with a number of Cree organizations, communities and other Departments to work on interpersonal and lateral violence, addictions, healthier life choices, domestic violence and other areas identified through hundreds of intakes with Cree clientele to raise awareness, provide support and create networks of complementary programs. As a Department, we want to work to improve services for the Cree communities, and create integrated systems that are more reflective and respectful of the people they seek to serve.

Cree Justice Facility Openings

The CRA Department of Justice and Correctional Services continued this year to expand its physical infrastructure by officially opening five new justice facilities. The buildings not only provide us with needed space to host various courts and tribunals, but also allow us to house local employees, justice committees and expanded programs and services for the communities.

Each opening is seen as a special event, and with the assistance of a coordination team from the CRA office in Nemaska, we try to ensure that each is unique and incorporates within the building local art, culture and history. The openings have attracted dignitaries and special guests such as our first Cree Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash, Québec Minister of Justice Jean-Marc Fournier, Chief Justice of Courts of Québec Elizabeth Corte, Federal Court of Appeals Judge Robert Mainville, Deputy Chief Justice of the Criminal and Penal Courts of Québec Danielle Côté and Associate Chief Justice André Perrault, among others. These guests have been hosted by Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come and Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff. There are three more facilities yet to open – Whapmagoostui, Nemaska and Eastmain

– and we are confident that they will be operational in the near future.

The Department has been invited to meet with the Judges and Crown Attorneys of Québec to discuss ways of bringing more timely and accessible sittings to the communities using technology and innovation. The University of Montreal has developed a courtroom laboratory, and invited the Department to become a partner in the development of new procedures and processes for the administration of justice. Further, the Department has visited the first Community Court in Canada, to see how we could develop a similar court in Eeyou Istchee that could help channel Cree individuals into addictions or other recognized programs provided by health and social services where appropriate, instead of into detention facilities that offer very little in the way of support and counselling.

The facilities, like the systems, must be places where we can generate prevention and rehabilitation programs and services to work with those who might otherwise come into contact with justice and corrections. From the beginning of the Department a few short years ago, building facilities, hiring and training Cree personnel



John Farrington

Waskaganish Justice Centre Opening (left to right) – Québec Courts Associate Chief Justice André Perreault, Chief of Waskaganish Gordon Blackned, Québec Minister of Justice Jean-Marc Fournier, Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come, Federal Court of Appeals Judge Robert Mainville, Superior Court Judge Jocelyn Geoffroy and Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff.



Graduates of the CICR Training Program. Back Row: Marie-Claude Picard, Joe Neeposh, Alvin Cash, Pamela Innes, Rene Coon Come, Brad AJ Georgekish, Wade Astynia, Nelson Mianscum. Front Row: Ruth Masty, Anna Neeposh, Flora Blacksmith, Majorie Icebound, Louise Coonishish, Clifford Benac, Charlie Louttit, and Nicole Charron.

were identified as priorities, so as to have a good foundation for better services and programs to the Cree Nation and communities.

Justice and Correctional Services Staffing

The Department has a continued commitment to providing professional development to our personnel. The Department is new to the Cree Nation, and so the building of skills and knowledge was an important first step, and a necessary investment into the growth of our own people and Nation.

There have been some new employees to the Department over the past fiscal year, and we still have some outstanding positions to fill in the present year. A key addition to the staff in 2011-2012 has been that of the three Coordinators of Justice. The duties of the Coordinator of Justice for communities and courts consist in overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Courts/Community unit of the Department, including staff management, program needs assessment, design, development and operation of community justice programs, justice facility administration, administration of Crime Victims Assistance Centre offices (CAVAC), liaison with provincial/federal/community justice partners and liaison with community justice committees.

The Corrections Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Correctional

Services unit of the Department, including staff management, correctional services system development, reintegration program needs assessment, design, development and operation, as well as liaison with provincial/federal correctional service partners. Finally, the Coordinator of Program Development is responsible for identifying justice program needs and creating or identifying suitable programs and services to meet those needs. This position is also responsible for liaison with staff and funders of special programs, such as the CRA Stop Now and Plan program (SNAP), and other organizations that we engage for projects, do partnerships with or coordinate events with for Cree clientele.

The Department welcomes these valued additions. The coordination team meets with the Director regularly to look at the status of operations and progress to date on services and programs, to plan training for personnel, to institute new tools such as work plans, databases and communication strategies, as well as to meet representatives of partner organizations to create a network of services that complement the work of other organizations and departments.

Conflict Resolution Certification

One of the key training programs for staff in the past fiscal year to improve upon the delivery of quality services and programs to the Cree Nation has been the

Canadian Centre for Conflict Resolution (CICR) training. The internationally acclaimed CICR has been offering alternative dispute and conflict resolution services around the world for more than 20 years to help people improve their ability to resolve conflicts. The training program is 160 hours of instruction, and is a blend of western alternative dispute resolution practices with traditional Aboriginal values, teachings and customary practices.

The certificates are recognized around the world, and graduates work on community-based approaches to resolve conflicts, reconcile differences and mediate between conflicting parties using a variety of processes. In keeping with our commitment to prevention and rehabilitation, we believe this training will help our staff play an instrumental role in mediating conflicts in the community, before they grow to become serious problems including those that may enter the criminal justice system when people may resort to violence or other means to settle disputes. Further, during this training, staff members were introduced to community dialogues which can bring together a much larger group of people to resolve issues that sometimes divide or immobilize communities. The Department would like to work with key groups within the Cree communities over the next year on community dialogues as well as mediation and conflict resolution processes.

Pardons Training

In December 2011, a number of Community Reintegration Officers (CROs) and Community Justice Officers (CJOs) received a two-day training program on the record suspension process, otherwise known as a “criminal pardon”, from experts from the National Pardon Centre. The presence of a criminal record can be a barrier in an individual’s redemption journey, and an impediment to obtaining employment in organizations within the community and the industries developing around the Cree Nation. The record suspension is a process within the justice system, so it was important for us to be prepared to assist our clientele in this regard. If eligible, it could mean that someone’s record would be sealed and therefore would not be an issue when seeking a job or crossing the border. Staff members were taught about the record suspension process and regulations, as well as how to do a proper intake to help determine eligibility for a pardon and prepare an initial case file for the government to process – depending on the offence for which a person has been found guilty and has completed his/her sentence, a 5 to 10 year waiting period is applicable before getting a pardon. The recent passage of Bill C-10 has also impacted the pardons process for eligibility or duration of waiting period based on the type of offence.

Gladue Training

In this year as well, several members of the Justice team received training in Gladue Report writing. A Gladue report is a type of pre-sentencing and bail hearing report that a Canadian court can request when considering sentencing an offender of Aboriginal background under Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code. In criminal sentencing in Canada, a court is required to take into account all reasonable alternatives to incarcerations, with particular attention to Aboriginal offenders. This is not an automatic “get-out-of-jail-free card.” Rather it requires the court to take into account circumstances facing Aboriginal persons. Where the crime is relatively minor, the court should consider Aboriginal-based sentencing principles such as restorative justice. The judge can then take this into consideration with any concern for community members or victims when determining a fit sentence. Since the completion of the training, the Court has already started accepting Gladue reports prepared by Cree justice personnel working with local committees, signifying an important addition to the role of community justice committees.

Victims Assistance Training

As part of our employee team, we have two CAVAC workers in place (one coastal, one inland) who provide services for victims of crimes requiring assistance, including but not limited to advice on the court process, referrals to counselling or social services and general support throughout their involvement with the criminal justice system. In this fiscal year, our CAVAC officers continued to build upon their skills and capabilities through additional training and education provided by the Government of Québec. Our CAVAC officers will continue their training, but they are already standing by to assist victims of crime in any way that they can. Their services include:

- Referral to post-trauma and/or psycho-social counselling or intervention.
- Referral to specialized services such as the appropriate legal, medical, social and community resources capable of assisting victims as they attempt to deal with the problems they face.
- Accompaniment to court or other aspects of trial/judicial process (e.g., examination for discovery) as well as to supporting community services as required (e.g., medical, housing, etc.)
- Technical assistance such as filling out required forms to enable victims to comply with all the formalities associated with their situation.



SNAP Site Visit – Noah Coonishish, Daniel Stermac-Stein, Chief Paul Gull, Desiree Philips, Sarah Ottereyes. Front: Lynda Bosum, Dorothy Nicholls and Monique Verpoort.

- Advice on court process, referrals to counselling or social services, and generally providing victims support before, during and after their involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Information on crime victims’ rights and remedies, which encompasses the main stages of the judicial process, the crime victims’ compensation program, INFOVAC-Plus and any financial assistance measures to which victims may be entitled.

For CAVAC services, Cree Nation members can contact us at 1-855-604-6137.

Justice Programs and Services

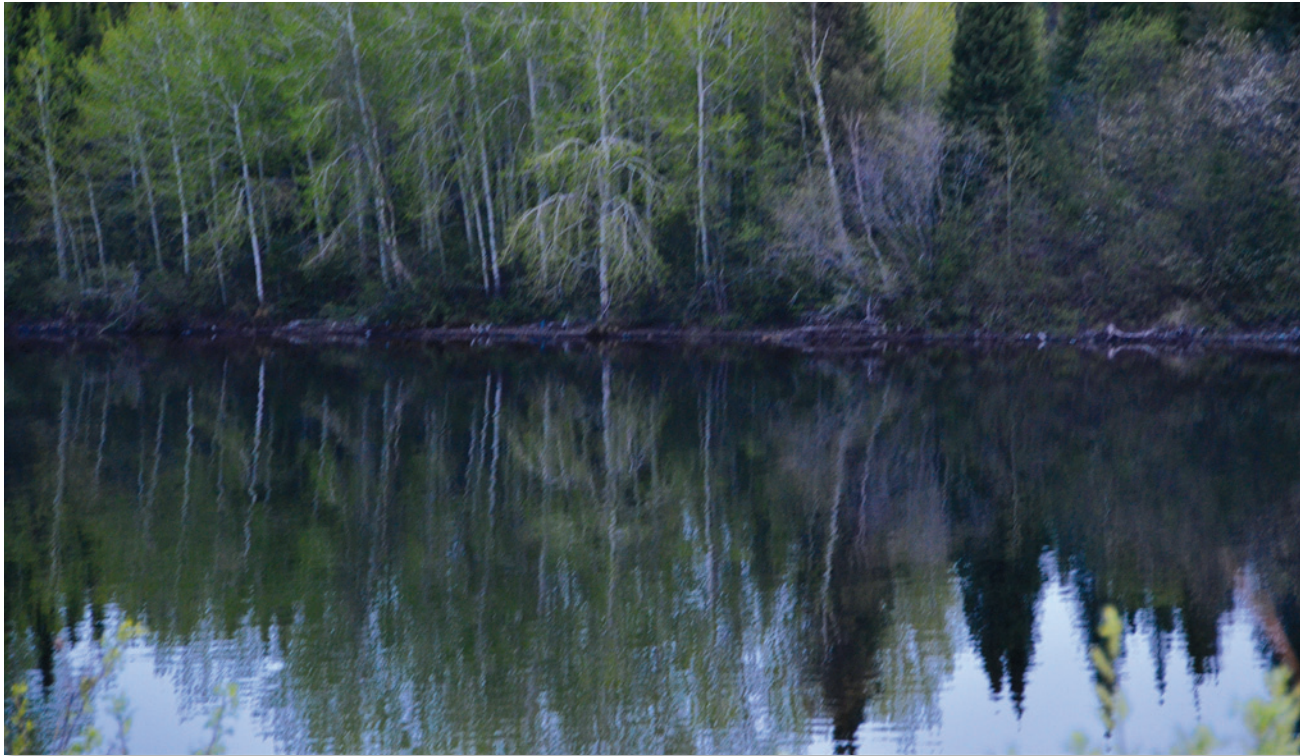
SNAP Program

This year we continued to operate the project Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) Program in Mistissini and Waswanipi through a \$1.4 million contribution by the Government of Canada (Public Safety Canada). The program is designed for boys and girls 6 to 11 who are experiencing behavioural challenges in the home or at school, and consists of a 12-week x 90 minute program

for both parent and child, where important life skills in behavioural regulation, conflict resolution and anger management are taught. While there were some initial challenges in program set-up, the program is now progressing well in both communities. During a recent evaluation, a parent of a SNAP child offered the following feedback:

This program has really helped our family. My boy is getting into lots less fights at school today as he uses his SNAP, calms down, and walks away. He is getting along better with his younger brother too, and is teaching him how to use SNAP! Because he is in less trouble, he is more involved with sports and recreation and is just a better behaving kid all around. I recommend SNAP to all parents!

In particular, the SNAP girls’ club program is proceeding very well, and now boasts active participation of both girls and their parents. With continued success, we are looking at expanding the program in the Cree Nation. In March, we hosted three members of the SNAP program team from the Child Development Institute, who completed a site review and provided additional required training to the entire team. The SNAP team



and members of the CDI delegation are shown here at the Waswanipi elder's lodge with Chief Paul Gull, after a delicious meal of moose chili and bannock.

Challenge Day

The CRA Department of Justice and Correctional Services hosted an inaugural "Challenge Day" in the Cree First Nation of Mistissini, on April 17 and 18, 2012. Established in the United States several years ago as a registered non-profit organization, Challenge Day's mission is to provide youth and their communities with experiential workshops and programs that demonstrate the possibility of love and connection through the celebration of diversity, truth and full expression. The 6 ½-hour Challenge Day program is designed for 100 students. The program is created to build connection and empathy, and to fulfill our vision that all children live in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated. Challenge Day is more than a one-day program. It is the spark that ignites a movement of compassion and positive change, known as the *Be the Change* movement. Not only do the activities of the day open the youth participants to awareness and understanding of each other, it also gives those who are at risk of hurting themselves or others an opportunity to find support and help. With

the success of this pilot project, the Department, along with its partners the Cree School Board and Cree Board of Health and Social Services, would like to bring this to more communities over the next fiscal year.

Other Initiatives

The Department is looking to work with key stakeholders over the next year to collaborate on an anti-bullying and lateral violence campaign, an addictions summit, domestic violence initiatives, community-based programming, and to further examine reintegration, rehabilitation and transitional programs and facilities. The Department also participated as a presenter in the *Kids Not Cons Summit* that brought together leading experts from around the world on child delinquency.

Finally, the Department would like to thank the departing Chair of the Cree-Québec Judicial Advisory Committee, Jacques Prigent, for his work over the past two years, and congratulate Gerti Murdoch as the new Chair for the next two years. The Committee provides valued expertise and insight, and makes recommendations on budgets, facilities, research and implementation of the provisions of the JBNQA, the New Relationship Agreements, and the Agreement on the Administration of Justice.