

The map displays the Matagami area, featuring the Bell River. Two primary study areas are highlighted: a yellow rectangular region (2.4 km²) and a purple circular region (0.13 km²). Sampling locations are marked with red diamonds (BH-01-25 to BH-11-25) and blue circles (TP-01-23 to TP-13-24). A dashed green line outlines a 2.00 km² area. The map is labeled 'Bell River' and 'Matagami'.

Proposed Site Location for Washaw Sibi Community

Who are the Washaw Sibi Eeyou?

Historically, the Washaw Sibi Eeyou have exercised their traditional activities on hunting grounds situated between Lake Abitibi and Kesagami Lake on both sides of what would become the boundary between Ontario and Quebec.



We were considered to be associated with the Rupert House (Waskaganish) Crees, although they would normally congregate at La Sarre (and we were sometimes known as the La Sarre Crees).

Throughout the 20th century, both the Federal government and Quebec refused to recognize Washaw Sibi as a separate Cree collectivity.

Rather, they were told that they were administratively considered to be part of the neighbouring Abitibi Algonquin groups.

To receive any services, Washaw Sibi Cree families therefore had to associate with different First Nations on both the Quebec and Ontario sides.



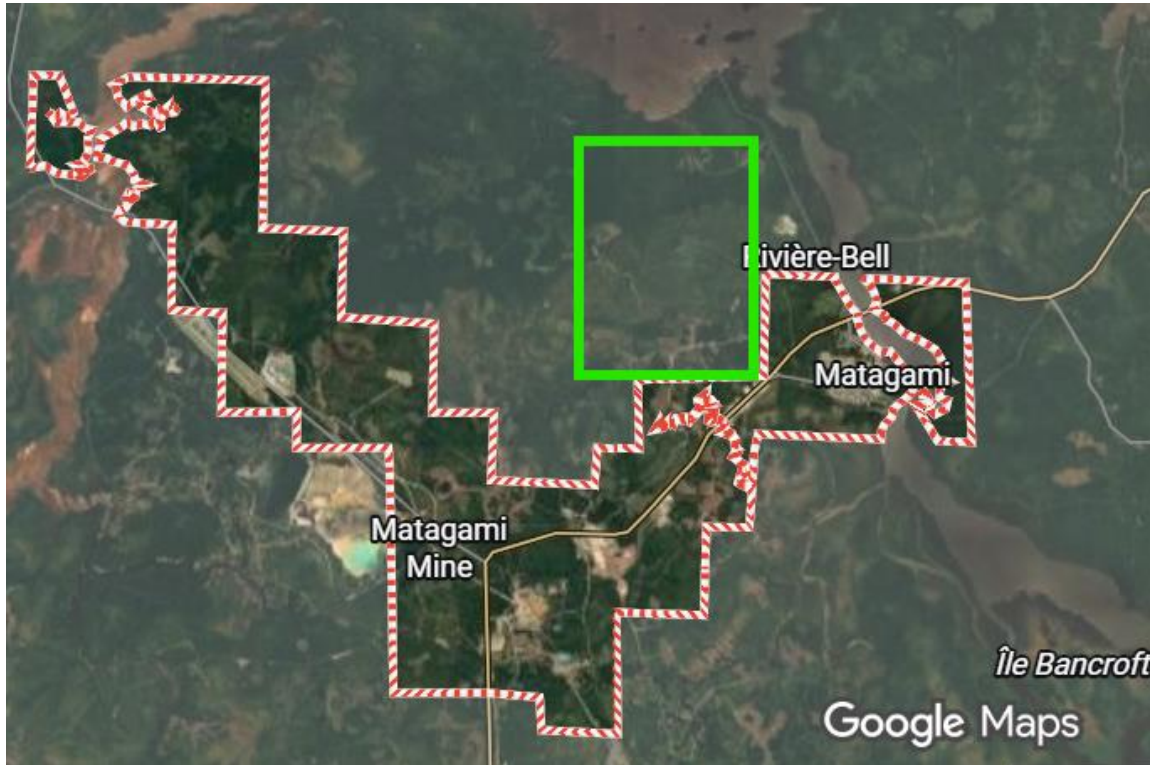
This created confusion about the identity of the Washaw Sibi Eeyou and contributed to difficulties in education, healthcare and employment.

Despite these challenges, a core group of Washaw Sibi Eeyou continued to function as a distinct Cree collectivity.

At last, in 2003, Washaw Sibi was formally recognized as the tenth Cree community at the Annual General Assembly of the Cree Nation.

The efforts of leadership have since then been focused on building a new home for the Washaw Sibi Eeyou.

Where will Washaw Sibi's community be located?



After many years of assessing different possible sites, in August 2023, the members of Washaw Sibi overwhelmingly selected a site for their future village, which is located on the outskirts of the Town of Matagami.

The site has several advantages: it is the southern gateway to Eeyou Istchee, it can connect to the existing infrastructure of Matagami and services could be shared between Washaw Sibi and Matagami. Matagami is supportive of the site selection and there are ongoing discussions on collaboration.

How many people will live in Washaw Sibi?

Although the band list of Washaw Sibi contains several hundred names, it is expected that approximately 150 people

will move to the new community and become its first resident members.

Why is it necessary to transfer Category IA lands?

To build its community and truly become a Cree First Nation under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, Washaw Sibi needs Category IA lands. It is on Category IA lands that a Cree First Nation exercises its powers to the fullest extent.

How can Waskaganish help?

Waskaganish has approximately 490 square kilometers of Category IA lands. Washaw Sibi has made a formal request to Council for the transfer of three (3) or five (5) square kilometers, representing less than 1% of the total Category IA lands.

How to transfer Category IA lands?

The lands would first be ceded by Waskaganish to Quebec pursuant to an Instrument of Cession following the approval of the community by way of referendum. Quebec would in turn have to cede an equivalent amount of Crown land to Canada which would be set aside for the construction of the community of Washaw Sibi.

How does a referendum process work?

To successfully transfer Category IA lands to Washaw Sibi, at least 65% of the electors of Waskaganish will have to vote in favour of such transfer.

What will be the impact on Waskaganish?

In addition to consenting to the transfer of approximately one percent of its Category IA lands, there will be a small impact on certain funding allocations available to Waskaganish.

DIGITAL INFORMATION BROCHURE



Scan the QR code to consult the Information Brochure about the Category IA Land Transfer Request submitted by the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi to the members of the Cree Nation of Waskaganish.