



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Grand Chief Stan Louttit Announces Regional Winter Games

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Grand Chief Stan Louttit, on behalf of the Regional Coordinator and Planning Team, announces the inaugural **Regional Winter Games for the Mushkegowuk First Nations**. “The concept of having the Winter Games has been on our minds and on our agendas for many years and the time has come for us to do it” says Grand Chief Stan Louttit.

In December 2010, Grand Chief Louttit presented the Winter Games concept to Minister Bradley and his senior staff from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (MAA) and they were convinced that the Winter Games would complement the work that the Youth Wellness Workers/Activators are providing in the communities. The Youth Wellness Workers/Activators and the program they deliver is funded by MAA. With support from MAA and Mushkegowuk Employment and Training Service, the Mushkegowuk Council hired Willie Carey (Regional Coordinator) and Phoebe Sutherland (Co-Coordinator) to coordinate the games. A Regional Planning Team with representation from Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Moose Cree and Right to Play Canada has been established to begin the process of designing and planning for the delivery of the Winter Games.

The objectives for the Winter Games are;

- *Promote active and living healthier lifestyles*
- *Play a part in addressing health related issues*
- *Provide more organized sport and cultural events*
- *Provide opportunities for the youth to develop planning and organizational skills*
- *Promote and preserve our culture*
- *Foster and promote unity within all of us*
- *Enhance existing sport and cultural programs*
- *Develop long term regional sport and cultural strategies*

The Coordinators and Planning Team are working under a very tight timeframe to organize and deliver the games. Included in the tight timeframe is the winter road; the plan is to complete the Games before the winter road is closed. The winter road will allow easy travel between communities and keep travel costs down.

Recognizing and acknowledging the many existing sport, recreation and cultural events in the region, the Winter Games is prepared to partner with existing sport and cultural events in the region.

At their training session and meeting held on Monday January 24, 2011, the Planning Team developed a draft Winter Games Plan and Schedule. The Winter Games will be delivered

starting in February 2011 and finishing off with a regional championship, banquet and awards ceremony in March 2011. Events included in the Winter Games are; CREE HOOPS Basketball Tournament, Mushkegowuk Challenge Cup (hockey), Volleyball Tournaments and a Mushkegowuk version of the Amazing Race Reality Show.

With support, cooperation and participation, from all communities, the Winter Games should be exciting, successful and enjoyed by everyone.

Each community will be provided an opportunity to host and deliver some of the proposed sport and cultural events. A copy of the Winter Games schedule can be obtained from Will Carey, Regional Coordinator.

Mushkegowuk Council is the regional political organization representing the Attawapiskat First Nation, Kashechewan First Nation, Fort Albany First Nation, Moose Cree First Nation, Taykway Tagamou Nation, Missanabie Cree First Nation and Chapleau Cree First Nation.

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