

Official programme

September 12-19, 2026 | Matimekush-Lac-John

“Preserve today to pass on tomorrow”

Eight days of gathering, memory, culture and sharing between generations, honouring Elders’ knowledge, Innu-aimun, traditional practices and the preservation of Indigenous languages.

At the Elders’ pace

The programme includes meals, activities and information sessions, theatre, games and evenings of sharing. From September 13 to 19, rest time is scheduled from 13:00 to 15:00. Liaison staff assist participants and communicate schedule changes. Water, snacks, chairs and rest areas are planned near activities.

After the gathering

Sunday, September 20, 2026: logistics day, tent dismantling, tidying and preparation for departure on Monday, September 21. Thank you for taking part.

Welcome to Elders, families, delegations and participating communities.

Saturday, September 12

Official opening, cultural pride and passing on the language

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:00-09:00	Breakfast and an informal welcome for participants.
Morning 09:00-12:00	A tour of the grounds, welcome areas, activity spaces and surroundings to help participants find their way throughout the week.
Lunch 12:00-13:00	Lunch.
Memorial 13:00-15:00	A ceremony at the cross in memory of Bernard Gobeil, known as “La Pipe”. Everyone who wishes to pay tribute is invited.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Delegation welcome, registration, settling in and distribution of information. Guidance for getting around and assistance for Elders moving between meal, rest and activity areas. Liaison officers will help participants find their way, identify individual needs and share essential information.
Supper 18:00-19:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Official opening of the 30th Elders’ Gathering 2026. A conversation with Hubert Lessard, Georges Awaad and Gérard Tsatselam about learning Innu-aimun and the importance of the language. A traditional clothing fashion presentation by Création Puamun, followed by a musical performance. The evening will celebrate language, culture, identity and the passing on of knowledge.

Sunday, September 13

Getting started, living memory and socially engaged theatre

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	Breakfast and an informal welcome for participants.
Morning 09:00-11:30	Discussion: "Living on the land: sharing, mutual support and caring for one another". Drawing on experiences on the land: living with few resources, food brought or shared, family support, traditional travel, and hunting, fishing and survival practices during famine. This session reflects on how communities learned to help one another, share and care for each other.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-18:00	Presentation of the play "TANITE NENE ETUATAMIN NITASSI? - Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays?" ("What have you done to my country?"), based on the work of An Antane Kapeshe, at the school gymnasium. This activity celebrates memory, history, voice and the passing on of culture.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	An evening of conversations among Elders: memories of arriving on the land, early life stories, encounters between communities and the opening of discussions about memory, language and sharing.

Monday, September 14

Hunting, fishing, trapping and land-based skills

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-11:30	Conversations with Elders about traditional spirituality, shamans, dreams, visions, prayers, the teueikan, signs from the land and teachings passed down by ancestors. A telephone phishing awareness workshop with speaker Aurel Mestokosho.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Games and contests for Elders. Active bingo at 5:00 p.m.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Conversations among Elders: hunting, fishing and trapping stories, preparing animals, respect for game, sharing food and passing on land-based skills.

Tuesday, September 15

Memory of the land, lived changes and traditional food

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-11:30	Book launch by Anne-Marie Ambroise. An information session on changes experienced by communities, government, industrial or mining pressures, relocations, loss of access to the land and effects on collective memory.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Games and contests for Elders. Nutrition workshop: from the land to the plate.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Conversations among Elders: accounts of changes, displacement, losses, resistance and lessons to pass on to young people. Discussion: what foods did First Nations bring when they went out on the land?

Wednesday, September 16

Traditional spirituality, encounters and memory of the land

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-11:30	Discussion of traditional hunting, fishing and trapping methods: caribou, small game, birds, net fishing, line fishing and ice fishing, and traps informed by seasons, tracks, winds and knowledge of the land. From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.: a presentation by Institut Tshakapesh - the IKUTA workshop, highlighting Innu roots, strengthening culturally meaningful practices and encouraging safe approaches that respect Innu knowledge, language and identity.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Games and contests for Elders. Creative journaling workshop: the six pillars of First Nations well-being.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Conversations among Elders about visitors in earlier times: people from other communities, travellers, religious figures, merchants, workers and distant relatives. Discussion of hospitality, memories, relationships, changes in ways of life and experiences with people from elsewhere.

Thursday, September 17

Passing on knowledge

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-12:00	A workshop on Elders' well-being. An information session on passing knowledge between generations, Elders' role as keepers of knowledge, values to share with young people, life lessons, mutual support, respect and responsibility toward the land.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Games and contests for Elders.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Conversations among Elders about sharing values, mutual support, passing knowledge to young people and essential knowledge to preserve.

Friday, September 18

Innu language, Nutshimiu-Aimun and passing on culture

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-12:00	An information session on Nutshimiu-Aimun, expressions specific to the land, old words, pronunciation, Elders' rich language knowledge and the importance of recording the language for future generations.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-18:00	Games and contests for Elders.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Planned evening: conversations among Elders about language, expressions from the land, old stories, memories connected to Nutshimiu-Aimun and the importance of passing these words on to younger generations.

Saturday, September 19

Language, culture, the future and the closing of the gathering

TIME	PROGRAMME
Breakfast 06:30-09:00	A shared meal.
Morning 09:00-11:30	An information session on preserving the Innu language, culture and collective memory. A celebration of Nutshimiu-Aimun, funny stories, anecdotes, messages to younger generations and connection to the land. A special moment, "There is still hope for the Innu language", will show that the language can still be learned, spoken and passed on with pride through listening to Elders, daily practice and love of the culture.
Lunch and rest 12:00-15:00	Lunch and a rest period. Rest time for Elders from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Afternoon 15:00-17:30	Games and contests for Elders.
Supper 18:00	Community supper.
Evening 19:00-22:30	Closing evening: conversations among Elders, messages to future generations, anecdotes, funny stories, lasting memories and the conclusion of the Mémoire vivante initiative. The evening continues with the official closing, singer-songwriters, the prize presentation, a draw to determine the community for the next Elders' Gathering and the official announcement of the host community for the 31st edition.