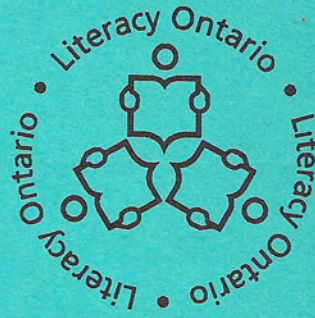


Literacy Ontario



Omushkego Cree Syllabic Project

Final Report

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Literacy and Basic Skills Section
Workplace Preparation Branch
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Ministry of Education and Training



Ontario

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OMUSHKEGO CREE SYLLABIC PROJECT

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July 1996

**submitted by
Greg Spence**

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1.0 Background

1.1 The Cree Language

The Cree language in the province of Ontario is found predominantly in Northeastern Ontario from the Hudson and James Bay coast south to the James Bay watershed where it borders the Ojibway and Oji-Cree languages.

Today, there are two dialects of Cree remaining in Northeastern Ontario: the "n" and "l" dialects. The "n" dialect has thousands of speakers and is used in the western James Bay coast and inland communities of Northeastern Ontario. However, the "l" dialect is limited to a few communities.

The "l" dialect communities of Moose Factory and Kashechewan are largely of Anglican denomination which preferred to adapt an eastern syllabic style of writing. Chapleau, Newpost, and Missinabe Cree are direct descendants of the "l" dialect speakers of James Bay. The remaining communities of Fort Albany, Attawapiskat, Peawanuck, Fort Severn and Constance Lake are "n" dialect speakers who have traditionally adopted the western syllabary. The "r" dialect which was a separate dialect spoken in the Kesagami Lake region, 100 kms south of the Moose river basin eventually disappeared as its speakers settled into the communities of Moose Factory, Ontario and Waskaganish, Quebec. Today the "r" dialect is non-existent. With advances in technology, all of the communities have been drawn together, and distance is less and less of a factor separating them. This contact results in dialectal mixing.

Cree is the first language spoken in the coastal communities. The exceptions are Moosonee and Moose Factory where, over the last decade, Cree has become a second language. This position is also true for New Post First Nation situated a few kilometres east of Cochrane. Constance Lake is also a Cree-speaking community and, much like Moosonee and Moose Factory, Cree is regarded as a second language. Cree is virtually non-existent in the Chapleau First Nation community. The Missanabie Cree who recently became affiliated with the Mushkegowuk Council were traditionally located just northeast of Wawa. The Missanabie First Nation is currently in the process of rebuilding and relocating back to the area. The use of Cree by the Missanabie is also non-existent.

1.2 Cree Syllabics

The Cree language took its literary form with the introduction of syllabics by a Wesleyan Methodist missionary in the mid 1800's. The Cree people quickly adopted this new form of writing, reading printed biblical and liturgical texts, as well as using it in every day communication. As formal education became more established in the communities, English became the language of instruction. Within two or three generations, Cree syllabics was overcome in schools by the influence of English.

Over the past two decades, most of the community schools have re-introduced Cree language instruction in an attempt to revive the language.

Retaining the language has been difficult for all communities as they struggle with the influence of the English language. As well, a new wave of societal influences presents major challenges in a fast moving, technological world. There is neither a set standard for spelling words nor a widely accepted dictionary to determine word meaning. Nor is there a manual or guide on grammatical structure. These factors makes it a difficult road back. Even more challenging is reviving the language, not only for the younger people but more so for the adults who want to learn to read and write the language which they already speak and understand.

1.3 Mushkegowuk Council / Payukotayno Workshop

In May 1995, the Mushkegowuk Council and Payukotayno Child & Family Services co-hosted a language workshop. Participating in this week-long session were a number of community members as well as Elders from each community. There was also a cross-section of social science workers, translators, and Cree language instructors in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to translate certain words commonly used in the language fields of medicine, social services, administration, and law.

Time was also devoted to discussing the long range outlook for the Cree language and what the future might hold for it. Issues such as loss of use and the influences attributed to it were discussed. The workshop participants agreed that there have been considerable efforts to retaining and maintaining the language. However, there seems to be no visible evidence of progress. Translations, new terminologies, and recording Cree words and phrases no longer common are being done and continue to be done. However, there is no commonly accepted spelling system or use of syllabics, no central warehouse or database for housing information, reference materials, and new materials. The long term goal was to build a Omushkego Language Institute. The short range goal was to work towards a standard by which the Cree language can be commonly used in the syllabic written form for the Cree in Ontario.

1.4 Ministry of Education and Training (MET) - Literacy and Basic Skills Section

The Literacy and Basic Skills Section, with its mandate to work with First Nations in standardizing Aboriginal languages in Ontario, was viewed as a potential funding agency on the work of the Ontario Cree language community. Kiskinnohamakaywi Weecheehitowin, the education department of the Mushkegowuk Council, approached MET which was receptive to considering a proposal for Cree language standardization. The conference was funded wholly by the Government of Ontario.

2.0 The Omushkego Syllabic Project

2.1 The Project Submission

Kiskinnohamakaywi Weecheehitowin (K.W.) prepared and submitted a proposal to the Government of Ontario in the winter of 1995. Following a brief exchange to clarify the project scope, a co-sponsorship agreement was signed between the Mushkegowuk Council and Ontario in May 1995. This co-sponsorship agreement resulted in the Ontario Cree people realizing their dream to pursue their vision of reviving and strengthening their language. At the same time, the agreement also made possible the government goal of standardizing the Aboriginal languages in Ontario.

2.2 Project Goal & Objectives

2.2.1 Goal

The goal of this project was as follows:

To develop a common syllabic spelling by creating spelling rules, to ensure consistency in the written use of the language, and to preserve the integrity of the Omushkego Cree Language.

2.2.2 Objectives

Five objectives were set out that would lead to achieving the project's goal:

1. **To review and examine various syllabic variants from existing printed documents.**
2. **To consult with local community experts to discuss patterns in the use of syllabics.**
3. **To document spelling usage and variations for the review of the Project Steering Committee.**
4. **To prepare a set of syllabic spelling variants and recommendations.**
5. **To convene a Omushkego Syllabic Orthography Conference to discuss and set standards for the common use of Cree Syllabics by the Omushkego Cree.**

2.3 Staff

To undertake the project, two staff members were engaged, the Project Coordinator who would be responsible for the project implementation and the Project linguist. Greg Spence, from the Mushkegowuk Council's Communication & Translation Unit, was appointed Project Co-ordinator. Greg is fluent in the Ontario Cree language and has been a translator for many years. He also facilitated many terminology workshops as well as taught Cree as a credit course for Laurentian University in Sudbury.

The Project Linguist was hired in order to provide assistance to the Project Coordinator in reviewing existing documents as well as in identifying variants in syllabics use. Dr. Marguerite Mackenzie, a linguist with Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, carried out this role. Dr. Mackenzie has previous experience in this field of work with the Quebec Cree in an identical project. She is also well versed on language projects with other First Nations in other parts of Canada.

2.4 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was established consisting of community members fluent in Ontario Cree, with extensive knowledge in Cree syllabics, and a keen interest in Cree language advocacy. An exception to this criteria for Committee membership was made for the First Nation community of Chapleau for reasons stated earlier in this report. The purpose of the Committee was to guide and to direct the project. A listing of the Committee members is provided in Appendix 4.3.

The Steering Committee met twice during the project. The first meeting convened September 1995 in Moose Factory and marked the start of the project. The purpose of the Committee was again reviewed. The background as well as the overall project was presented in detail to the Committee members. Committee members were assigned the task of identifying a core group of people in their respective community for the Project Coordinator. The Coordinator would consult with these individuals on the use of syllabics during community visits that would take place as the project unfolded. It was also pointed out that the Committee would be central to the planning of the conference to take place prior to March 1996.

The second meeting was held in Timmins on January 30, and February 1, 1996. The Committee was briefed on the project's progress. Again, the project's goal and objectives were reviewed in order to maintain focus on the project's mission. More importantly the Project Coordinator and Project Linguist revealed their findings on syllabic variants to the Committee. As well, a number of recommendations were tabled on issues that must be addressed in order to realize further the vision of retaining and, in some cases, reviving the Ontario Cree language.

These variants and recommendations were accepted by the Committee as items that would be slated for discussion at the conference. Following this item, the Committee discussed and set the logistics for convening the Omushkego Syllabic Conference.

2.5 Methodology

2.5.1 Reference Materials Collection

The first phase of the work undertaken was to collect as much printed text as possible in Cree syllabics. The Project Coordinator and Project Linguist identified known text and started the process of retrieving copies. The collection of Cree syllabic text became an on-going exercise for the project team. The text was used as reference material in identifying syllabic variants.

2.5.2 Community Visits

Community visits were made by the Project Coordinator to meet with the core group identified by the Steering Committee members in order to discuss Cree syllabics use in the communities. The project linguist, Dr. Marguerite Mackenzie, was scheduled to visit the northern remote community of Fort Severn in October 1995. Not all communities were visited as originally planned. However, the majority of the Cree communities where syllabics are extensively used were visited. The following is a list of all communities visited, dates when visited, and their preferred syllabic system for writing.

Fort Severn	October 2-6, 1995 Western
Peawanuck	October 17, 18, 19, 1995 Western
Moosonee	November 9, 10, 1995 Western
Attawapiskat	November 15, 16, 1995 Western
Fort Albany	November 25, 26, 1995 Western

Kashechewan	January 4, 5, 1996 Eastern
Moose Factory	January 9,10, 1996 Western
Constance Lake	January 20,21, 1996 Eastern

The use of syllabics was noted and, upon returning, tabulated and compared with other communities as well as those found in reference materials collected.

2.6 Omushkego Syllabic Conference

The Omushkego Syllabic Conference was held in Moose Factory on February 27, 28, and 29, 1996. The following are highlights of the three-day event.

2.6.1 Conference Theme & Goal

It was felt that a theme for the conference would be important. Choosing the right theme would help provide the long term focus on the work that lie ahead. After some discussion and debate, the Steering Committee chose the theme "Preserving Our Language".

The goal of the conference was as follows:

To establish a common syllabic spelling system by creating syllabic spelling rules that would ensure consistency in the use of the language and work towards preserving the integrity of the Omushkego Cree Language.

2.6.2 Conference Objectives

The Conference had essentially two objectives and are as follows:

- 1. To review and discuss the syllabic variants and to decide on the standard to be used.**
- 2. To review and discuss the project's related recommendations that would set the way for further work in the field of language maintenance.**

2.6.3 Conference Participants

The Conference participants included all Steering Committee members. In addition, each member was asked to identify two other community members to take part in the conference. Others invited were Cree language instructors, translators, Education Authority officials as well as Chief and Councils. A special invitation was extended to the Moosonee Friendship Centre which offers an Adult Cree Literacy Program. The meeting was open to all and everyone who wished to attend. Also invited and in attendance to observe the proceeding was John Stanley, of the Literacy and Basic Skills Section.

A complete listing of conference participants can be found in this report under Appendix 4.4, Omushkego Syllabics Conference Participants List.

2.6.4 Decisions on Variants

Much of the three days was devoted to discussion and, in some instances to lively debate over syllabic variants. A total of seventeen variants were tabled for discussion and the participants were asked to decide on the accepted standard for common use. Some of the variants were common to all communities. Others were specific to single communities.

Decisions on all seventeen variants were made by the conference delegates. A complete listing of the decisions are provided in the report as Appendix 4.2, Conference Decisions on Syllabic Variants.

2.6.5 Conference Recommendations

The vision for maintaining and strengthening the language spans several years of committed and dedicated work. The work includes several facets, such as the development of a syllabic dictionary, a reference grammar, the implementation of the decisions made on variants by the conference, and pedagogical development for Cree language teachers.

The conference participants were presented with a number of recommendations which were endorsed by the conference. A listing of these recommendations is provided in this report under Appendix 4.1, Conference Recommendations.

3.0 Follow - up: Implementation of Recommendations

Since the meeting that sparked this project in May 1995, the ground covered by the project to date has been encouraging. The Steering Committee as a whole was excited about the conference. Others were cautiously optimistic as issues related to language, dialect, and writing style may be so deeply entrenched that consensus may not always be possible. In the end, the decisions were made, some with more ease than others.

This project is regarded only as a beginning. This project's end was successful as it was able to achieve satisfactorily all objectives. The project was also able to achieve its objective in identifying seventeen variants and deciding by consensus on a common use of syllabics by all communities. These decisions on a common usage is the beginning to establishing spelling rules which will ensure consistency in the written use of the Omushkego Cree Language.

The stage has been set and the next step is to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

4.0: Appendices

- 4.1 Conference Recommendations
- 4.2 Conference Decisions on Variants
- 4.3 Steering Committee Members
- 4.4 Syllabics Conference Participants List
- 4.5 Cree Syllabium Chart

Appendix 4.1: Conference Recommendations:

1. The conference delegates request that a manual of spelling for Cree syllabics be prepared and distributed. This manual will include the decisions made at this conference with examples.
2. The conference delegates request that a syllabic dictionary of the Cree language of Omushkego Cree be produced, in order that the spelling decisions which have been taken at this conference can be properly implemented. The spellings which have been decided on at the conference will be encoded in this dictionary.
3. The conference delegates request that a reference grammar of the Cree language of Mushkegowuk Cree be produced. This grammar will show how the spelling decisions affect words which have endings added and new words which are created.
4. The conference delegates request that the spelling decisions be implemented through training courses in Cree literacy which will teach people to use the spelling decisions in a consistent manner.
5. The conference delegates request that the spelling decisions be implemented through increased production of books and newsletters in Cree syllabics for schools and for adults.
6. The conference delegates request that existing guidelines for Cree language programs for adults (both speaking and reading/writing) be made uniform.
7. The conference delegates request that pedagogical development workshops for teachers of Omushkego Cree language be given at frequent intervals. The purpose of these workshops will be to familiarize teachers with the spelling decisions, with proofreading, and with the use of the dictionary and grammar.
8. The conference delegates request that a committee be established to proofread books before publication. The committee will consist of people involved in Cree language and will ensure that any new material which is published will follow the decisions approved at this conference. It may also be responsible for rewriting older materials at the request of the author in order to follow the decisions.

Appendix 4.2: Conference decisions on syllabic variants:

Decision 1: Western or Eastern small syllabics

There are two sets of small syllabics (also called finals) which are used at the end of words and sometimes in the middle of words. They are usually called the Western set and the Eastern set.

Roman	p	t	k	c	m	n	s	sh
Western	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ
Eastern	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ	ᐅ

Final decision:

The "n" dialect communities or Swampy Cree will use the Western set (Fort Severn, Peawanuck, Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Moosonee).

The "l" dialect speakers or Moose Cree will use the eastern set (Moose Factory, Kashechewan, Constance Lake). Chapleau Cree will use the Moose Cree materials. Constance Lake community will use the Eastern set.

Decision 2: "w" syllabic character at the end of word

The w-circle (°) at the end of a word will be used by both "n" and "l" speakers.

ᐅV°	man
ᐅᐅ°	woman
ᐅᐅ°	cries
ᐅᐅ°	sleeps
ᐅᐅ°	sugar
ᐅᐅ°	brings it
ᐅᐅ°	day
ᐅᐅ°	tobacco

Do not use dot at the end of a word.

ᐅV°	man	ᐅᐅ°	woman	ᐅᐅ°	cries	ᐅᐅ°	sleeps
ᐅᐅ°	sugar	ᐅᐅ°	brings it	ᐅᐅ°	day	ᐅᐅ°	tobacco

Decision 3: Syllabic for "l", or ^c at end of word

The syllabic for "l" at the end of a word in the "n" dialect will be (^τ). This syllabic is to be used in names like "Bill".

"n" speakers ^τ [∧]^τ

"l" speakers ^c [∧]^c

Decision 4: Using the [↳] or [^] character for "y" sound at end of word.

The small [↳] character will be used to indicate the "y" sound at end of word. The "n" dialect speakers will still use the [^] character for their personal writing. However, for publication the [↳] character will be used.

◁▷ [↳]	◁▷ [^]	paddle
◁▷Γ◁▷ [↳]	◁▷Γ◁▷ [^]	oatmeal cereal
dσ◁▷ [↳]	dσ◁▷ [^]	snow water
◁▷◁▷ [↳]	◁▷◁▷ [^]	blood clot
PΓ◁▷◁▷ [↳]	PΓ◁▷◁▷ [^]	rain water
∫◁▷ [↳]	∫◁▷ [^]	salt water
L◁▷◁▷ [↳]	L◁▷◁▷ [^]	cheek
L◁▷b [↳]	L◁▷b [^]	skin
Γ◁▷◁▷ [↳]	Γ◁▷◁▷ [^]	hair
◁▷ ^υ ◁▷b [↳]	◁▷ ^υ ◁▷b [^]	birch bark
ΓC◁▷b [↳]	ΓC◁▷b [^]	ear

Decision 5: Using a dot on top of a syllabic to mark the long sound

Many words in Cree can be written with a dot over the syllabic to mark the long sound. Speakers of "l" dialect wish to use the dots. Speakers of "n" dialects chose not to use the dot.

Writing the dots will make reading easier for new readers, since there are more clues to the word's pronunciation. People who can already read well do not usually need the dot to figure out how the word is pronounced. People who are used to seeing and using the dots say that they can read faster with the dots.

Sometimes two words will be written exactly the same when the dots are not used. This situation does not cause problems in reading, since it is possible to understand the word from the context. For example:

with dot:

ᑭᑲᐃᑲᑦ
ᑭᑲᐃᑲᑦ

ᐱᑭᑦᑲᑲᑦ
ᐱᑭᑦᑲᑲᑦ

“l” speakers

ᑭᑲᑲᑦ
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ

without dot:

ᑭᑲᐃᑲᑦ lake
ᑭᑲᐃᑲᑦ screw

ᐱᑭᑦᑲᑲᑦ twist
ᐱᑭᑦᑲᑲᑦ moving

“n” speakers

ᑭᑲᑲᑦ canoe
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ again
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ man
ᑭᑲᑲᑦ dances

Decision 6: “w” dot character before or after syllabic

In Fort Severn, there is much variation where people write the “w” dot. The “w” dot character is utilized to indicate the “w” sound at the beginning of a word. Some people write ·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ and other people write ᐃᑲᑲᑦ. All the other Cree communities in Ontario use the dot in front of the syllabic as in ·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ. **Wawatay** newspaper also uses the dot on the left.

At the conference, the Fort Severn representatives indicated they are willing to use the dot on the left.

·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	snow goose
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	rabbit
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	muskrat
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	hello; goodbye
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	on top
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	soon
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	home
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	bay
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	throws it away
·ᐃᑲᑲᑦ	it blows away

Decision 7: Using ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ

In Fort Severn, people do not always use the ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ syllabics. This situation arises because it is difficult to hear the difference in sound between ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ and ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ in this dialect. However, the Fort Severn community use the Plains Cree Bible. This version uses only ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ. All other Cree speakers in Ontario pronounce and write ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ.

The Fort Severn representatives agreed to the use of ᓂ ᓃ ᓄ ᓅ ᓆ in publications.

ᓃᓃ'	duck
ᓂᓅ°	big
ᓅᓃ'	nine
ᓅ·ᓂᓄ'	to the south
ᓂᓃ°	dry
ᓂᓅᓃ'	already
ᓂᓃᓄ·ᓂᓃ'	appear so

It will also be applied before a consonant.

ᓂᓃᓄᓅ°	fire
ᓂᓃᓂᓃ'	above
ᓂᓃᓄ·ᓂ	later

Decision 8: Using only ᓇ end of words

There are a number of words in all dialects of Cree which end with a "ch" sound. In Fort Severn, some people pronounce these word with a "t" sound at the end and other people pronounce the "ch" sound. In the dictionary for Ontario Cree, these words will be written with the "ch" sound at the end.

The Fort Severn people have agreed to the use of ᓇ :

ᓂᓃᓄᓇ	while
ᓂᓃᓄᓇ	slowly
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	ever
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	long ago
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	on top
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	out in the water
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	suddenly
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	in exchange
ᓂᓃᓄᓇᓇ	maybe

Decision 9: Aspirate "h" sound

There is an "h" sound in many Cree words. Some people like to write this sound with the symbol "h", but many people leave it out. Some people like to use the "h" only before
 ▽ △ ▷ ◁.

The "l" dialect representatives favour using the "h" symbol.

However, it was decided that the "n" dialect will not mark the "h" sound.

"l" dialect

▽"▽
 •▽"•▽°
 ▷"▷Γ°
 Lᵀᵀᵀ"Δᵀᵀᵀ
 Lᵀᵀᵀ"Δᵀᵀᵀ°
 •◁ᵀᵀᵀ"Δᵀᵀᵀ°
 ▷CL"◁ᵀᵀ
 ḡP"▽°

"n" dialect

▽▽
 •▽•▽°
 ▷▷Γ°
 LᵀᵀᵀΔᵀᵀᵀ°
 LᵀᵀᵀΔᵀᵀᵀ°
 •◁ᵀᵀᵀΔᵀᵀᵀ°
 ▷CL◁ᵀᵀ
 ḡP▽°

yes
 goose
 owl
 book
 he writes
 house
 he strikes it
 he loves her

Decision 10(a): σ character which means "I", "me", "my", and "our."

Big σ will be used at the beginning of a noun when it means "my" or "our."

"n" dialect

σUᵀ
 σᵀ ᵀUᵀ
 σᵀ ◁ḡΓᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ

"l" dialect

σUᵀ
 σᵀ ᵀUᵀ
 σᵀ ◁ḡΓᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ

my dog
 my friend
 our snowshoes

Big σ will be used at at the beginning of words when it means "you."

"n" dialect

σCᵀᵀσᵀᵀ

"l" dialect

σCᵀᵀσᵀᵀ I arrive

Decision 10(b): Contraction of α and σ

Some words which begin with α' or σ' currently vary in their spelling. These words are difficult and should be looked at individually for the dictionary. Here are some of the problem words:

"n" dialect

"l" dialect

$\alpha\zeta\cdot\nabla\sigma\tau^\circ$	$\nu\zeta\cdot\nabla\sigma\tau^\circ$	$\alpha\zeta\cdot\nabla\sigma\tau^\circ$	$\alpha\zeta\cdot\nabla\sigma\tau^\circ$	want him
$\alpha\eta\delta\delta^2$	$\nu\eta\delta\delta^2$	$\alpha\eta\delta\delta^{\alpha}$	$\alpha\eta\delta\delta^{\alpha}$	medicine
σU^c	νU^c	σU^l	αU^l	my dog
$\alpha\zeta\cdot\triangleleft\zeta\tau^\circ$	$\nu\zeta\cdot\triangleleft\zeta\tau^\circ$	$\alpha\zeta\cdot\triangleleft\zeta\tau^\circ$	$\alpha\zeta\cdot\triangleleft\zeta\tau^\circ$	he is looking
$\alpha\eta\zeta^c$	$\nu\eta\zeta^c$	$\alpha\eta\zeta^l$	$\alpha\eta\zeta^l$	he is listening

Decision 10(c): Small "n" in the middle of a word

A few words will have small ν or α in the middle.

"n" dialect

"l" dialect

$\triangleleft^{\nu}U$	$\triangleleft^{\alpha}U$	over there
$\triangleleft^{\nu}\zeta$	$\triangleleft^{\alpha}\zeta$	on; in
$\zeta^{\nu}U$	$\zeta^{\alpha}U$	where
$\zeta^{\nu}\zeta$	$\zeta^{\alpha}\zeta$	where specifically
$L^{\nu}U^\circ$	$L^{\alpha}U^\circ$	stranger; guest

Decision 11: Contraction of Γ

When Γ is used in the middle of a word, it is sometimes written small or left out completely. Big Γ should always be used.

"n" dialect

"l" dialect

$\Lambda\Gamma<\sigma^\circ$	$\Lambda^c<\sigma^\circ$	$\Lambda\Gamma<\sigma^\circ$	$\Lambda^l<\sigma^\circ$	propelled
$\Lambda\Gamma\Lambda\rho^\circ$	$\Lambda^c\Lambda\rho^\circ$	$\Lambda\Gamma\Lambda\rho^\circ$	$\Lambda^l\Lambda\rho^\circ$	on a journey

Decision 12(a): Nouns ending in "iw"

The names for many plants, animals, and birds end in ρ° or \jmath° or ρ° or σ° . Often these particles are pronounced as d° or ζ° or ρ° or ω° .

Use these spelling:

$\text{bb}\rho^\circ$	crow
$\wedge\rho^\circ$	gum
$\cdot\Delta\wedge\rho^\circ$	walrus
$\Delta\sigma\sigma^\circ$	man
$\text{L}\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	fox
$\wedge\sigma\rho^\circ$	bird
$\wedge\jmath^\circ$	lynx
$\cdot\nabla\Gamma^\circ\cap d\jmath^\circ$	European
$\triangleright\triangleright\Gamma\rho^\circ$	owl
$\Gamma\rho\rho^\circ$	eagle
$\cdot\triangleleft\wedge\rho^\circ$	swan
$\jmath\jmath\jmath^\circ$	yellow-leg
$\triangleright^\circ\rho\sigma\rho^\circ$	young man
$\triangleleft\text{b}^\circ\rho^\circ$	sharp-tail grouse
$\cdot\triangleleft\wedge\text{b}\sigma$	ptarmigan
$\cdot\triangleleft\zeta\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	white fox

When the ending of a word changes, the real "i" sound can be heard.

"n" dialect

"l" dialect

$\wedge\rho^\circ$	$\sigma\wedge\rho^\circ$	$\wedge\rho^\circ$	$\sigma\wedge\rho^\circ$	gum, my gum
$\text{L}\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	$\sigma\text{L}\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	$\text{L}\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	$\sigma\text{L}\mathfrak{q}\jmath^\circ$	fox, my fox

Decision 12(b): Verbs ending in -iw

There are many verbs, or action words, which some people write with \wedge° , ρ° , σ° , Γ° , ρ° at the end while other people write ρ° , σ° , \triangleright° , \jmath° .

The conference decided that these verbs should be written this way.

$\triangleleft\wedge^\circ$	he is sitting
$\Gamma\Gamma^\circ$	he is eating
$\sigma\Gamma^\circ$	he is dancing
$\triangleleft\zeta\cap\rho^\circ$	he is working
$\cdot\text{b}^\circ d\cap^\circ$	he is jumping
$d^\circ\zeta\Gamma^\circ$	he is afraid
$\sigma\wedge^\circ$	he is dying

◁◁◊◊°	he is working
UC◊°	he is sitting on
<◊°	he is laughing

There are many more verbs with this ending. They will be listed in the dictionary

When we look at the stem of the word, with and without endings, we can see the way it should be spelled.

◁◊°	◁◊°	sitting
◁◊	◁◊	sit
▽ ◁◊'	▽ ◁◊ ^c	while seated
b ◁◊◊°	b ◁◊◊ ^a	while I was seated
p' ◁◊°	p ^c ◁◊ ^a	are you sitting
◊◊°	◊◊°	eating
◊◊	◊◊	eat
▽ ◊◊'	▽ ◊◊ ^c	while he ate
b ◊◊'	b ◊◊ ^c	when he ate
p ◊◊°	p ◊◊ ^a	you ate

There are however, some words which should be spelled with ◊°, ◊° and other "ow sounds.

"n" dialect

◊b◊°
 a b◊
 ▽ ◊b◊'

◊◊◊°
 ◊◊◊
 ▽ ◊◊◊'

"l" dialect

◊b◊° he is singing
 ◊b◊ sing
 ▽ ◊b◊^c while he sang

◊◊◊° eating
 ◊◊◊ eat
 ▽ ◊◊◊^c while he ate

Decision 13: Nouns ending in ◊△°

It is possible to make a noun from a verb by adding the ending ◊△° or ◊△^a. Some people write ▷° instead. Always write ◊△° for these nouns.

◊L°	taking food	◊L◊△°	camp food
◊b◊°	he is singing	◊b◊◊△°	song
◊◊^q°	he is working	◊◊^q◊△°	work
◊C◊°	he is playing	◊C◊◊△°	game

When this ending is added to verbs like $\cup\text{C}\wedge^{\circ}$ and $\triangleleft\text{b}\Gamma^{\circ}$, we have to be careful not to use > or J before $\cdot\Delta^{\circ}$.

$\triangleleft\text{b}\Gamma^{\circ}$	he is taking	$\triangleleft\text{b}\Gamma\cdot\Delta^{\circ}$	speech
$\wedge\text{L}\cap\text{r}^{\circ}$	living	$\wedge\text{L}\cap\text{r}\cdot\Delta^{\circ}$	life
$\triangleleft\sigma\Gamma\text{r}^{\circ}$	he is difficult	$\triangleleft\sigma\Gamma\text{r}\cdot\Delta^{\circ}$	problem

Decision 14: Compound words

When two words are joined to make a longer word, some people leave a space between the words and other people join them together.

A space should be left between the words.

$\triangleleft\text{C}\cap\text{r}\cdot\Delta$	$\text{aP}^{\circ}\text{b}\text{C}\cdot\Delta^{\circ}$	workshop
$\triangleleft\text{b}\Gamma\text{v}\cdot\Delta$	$\text{Lr}\text{a}\Delta\text{b}^{\circ}$	catechism

Decision 15: Spaces between prefixes

Prefixes can be added to the beginning of verbs (action words) to discuss concepts like present and past time, wanting to do something, being able to do something. A space should be left after each prefix.

σ	b	σC°	I will sleep
σ	$\cdot\Delta$	σC°	I am sleepy
σ	P	σC°	I slept
v	σC°		while he slept

Decision 16: Spaces after the prefixes for I/my, you/your, he/his/she/her

When the prefix is written separately with a space, then the stem of the word is easy to recognize.

When the prefix is written together with the word, the first syllabic of the word changes and the word is more difficult to recognize, especially for new readers. However, it looks more like the pronunciation.

σ'	$\text{D}\text{C}\text{C}^{\circ}$	σ^{c}	$\text{D}\text{C}\text{C}^{\circ}$	$\sigma\text{J}\text{C}\text{C}^{\circ}$	$\sigma\text{J}\text{C}\text{C}^{\text{a}}$	my load
D'	$\triangleleft\text{H}\text{L}$	D^{c}	$\triangleleft\text{H}\text{L}$	$\text{D}\text{C}\text{H}\text{L}$	$\text{D}\text{C}\text{H}\text{L}$	his snowshoes
P'	$\text{v}\Gamma\cdot\text{b}^{\circ}$	P^{c}	$\text{v}\Gamma\cdot\text{b}^{\text{a}}$	$\text{P}\text{U}\Gamma\cdot\text{b}^{\circ}$	$\text{P}\text{U}\Gamma\cdot\text{b}^{\text{a}}$	your spoon
P'	$\triangleleft\wedge^{\circ}$	P^{c}	$\triangleleft\wedge^{\text{a}}$	$\text{P}\text{C}\wedge^{\circ}$	$\text{P}\text{C}\wedge^{\text{a}}$	you are seated
P'	$\text{D}\text{J}\text{C}^{\circ}$	P^{c}	$\text{D}\text{J}\text{C}^{\text{a}}$	$\text{P}\text{J}\text{J}\text{C}^{\circ}$	$\text{P}\text{J}\text{J}\text{C}^{\text{a}}$	you are making

Decision 17: Writing \cap or \uparrow

Some words are sometimes now written with \uparrow when they should be written with \cap . These words need careful study before they are written in the dictionary.

$\Delta\uparrow\cap\uparrow\cdot\triangleleft b^{\circ}$
 $\Delta\uparrow\uparrow\uparrow\cdot\triangleleft b^{\circ}$

$\Delta\uparrow\cap\uparrow\cdot\triangleleft b^{\circ}$
 $\Delta\uparrow\uparrow\uparrow\cdot\triangleleft b^{\circ}$

messenger
messenger

$\triangleright\cap\uparrow\triangleleft\sigma^{\circ}$
 $\triangleright\uparrow\uparrow\triangleleft\sigma^{\circ}$

$\triangleright\cap\uparrow\triangleleft\sigma^{\circ}$
 $\triangleright\uparrow\uparrow\triangleleft\sigma^{\circ}$

arrive at a place
from somewhere

Appendix 4.3: Omushkego Syllabic Project Steering Committee:

Fort Albany:	Helen Rodrique
Constance Lake:	Bertha Metat
Attawapiskat:	Madeline Hookimaw
Moose Factory:	Elsie Chilton
Moosonee:	Annabella Goulet
Chapleau Cree:	Doreen Cachagee
Kashechewan:	Phillip Goodwin
Peawanuck:	Louie Bird
New Post:	Veronica Archibald

Appendix 4.4: Conference Participants:

Moose Factory	Elder Minnie Isaac Elder Daisy Turner
Moosonee	Education Consultant Jane Moore Translator Jim Etherington
Chapleau	Cecile Wesley, Community health nurse Cree language, Co-ordinator Marjorie Lee
Kashechewan	Teacher Phillip Goodwin Intrepretor John Wesley Elder Willie Wesley
Peawanuck	Teacher Maggie Gull Elder Pauline Hunter
Fort Severn	Teacher Edna Thomas Teacher Betsy Turtle Teacher Adelaide Kostachin
Fort Albany	Education Consultant Sister Catherine Tekakweta Translator Gabriel Loon
Constance Lake	Elder Angela Moore Teacher Annie Reese
New Post	Elder Simeon Mathews Elder Juliet Sutherland Martha Gelinias, Delegate representative
Timmins	Translator Annie Ashmock
Attawapiskat	Elder Elizabeth Wesley Teacher Gabriel Spence Elder Theresa Kataquapit
Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre, Timmins	Translator Harriet Paul Martin Angela Shisheesh, Literacy co-ordinator Bertha Metat, Director
Sioux Lookout	Translator Mary Mckay

Appendix 4.5: Syllabarium with Roman equivalents and length dots:

	e	i	i	o	oo	a	aa	east	west
	▽	△	△̇	▷	▷̇	◁	◁̇	∅	∅
w	we	wi	wii			wa	waa	w	w
	∇	∧	∧̇	>	>̇	<	<̇	<	∅
p	pe	pi	pii	po	poo	pa	paa	p	p
	∪	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
t	te	ti	tii	to	too	ta	taa	t	t
	q	p	ṗ	d	ḋ	b	ḃ	b	∅
k	ke	ki	kii	ko	koo	ka	kaa	k	k
	q	p	ṗ	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
c	ce	ci	cii	co	coo	ca	caa	c	c
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
m	me	mi	mii	mo	moo	ma	maa	m	m
	∅	∅	∅̇	∅	∅̇	∅	∅̇	n	n
n	ne	ni	nii	no	noo	na	naa	n	n
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
l	le	li	lii	lo	loo	la	laa	l	l
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
s	se	si	sii	so	soo	sa	saa	s	s
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
sh	she	shi	shii	sho	shoo	sha	shaa	sh	sh
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
y	ye	yi	yii	yo	yoo	ya	yaa	y	y
	∩	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	∩	∩̇	c	c
r	re	ri	rii	ro	roo	ra	raa	r	r