The background of the slide features a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees against a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a darker purple at the top. The trees are dark and detailed, with their branches and needles visible against the lighter sky.

# First Nations and Researchers: Making a case out of a diabetes project

Alain Cuerrier, PhD  
Jardin botanique de Montréal  
Institut de recherche en biologie végétale  
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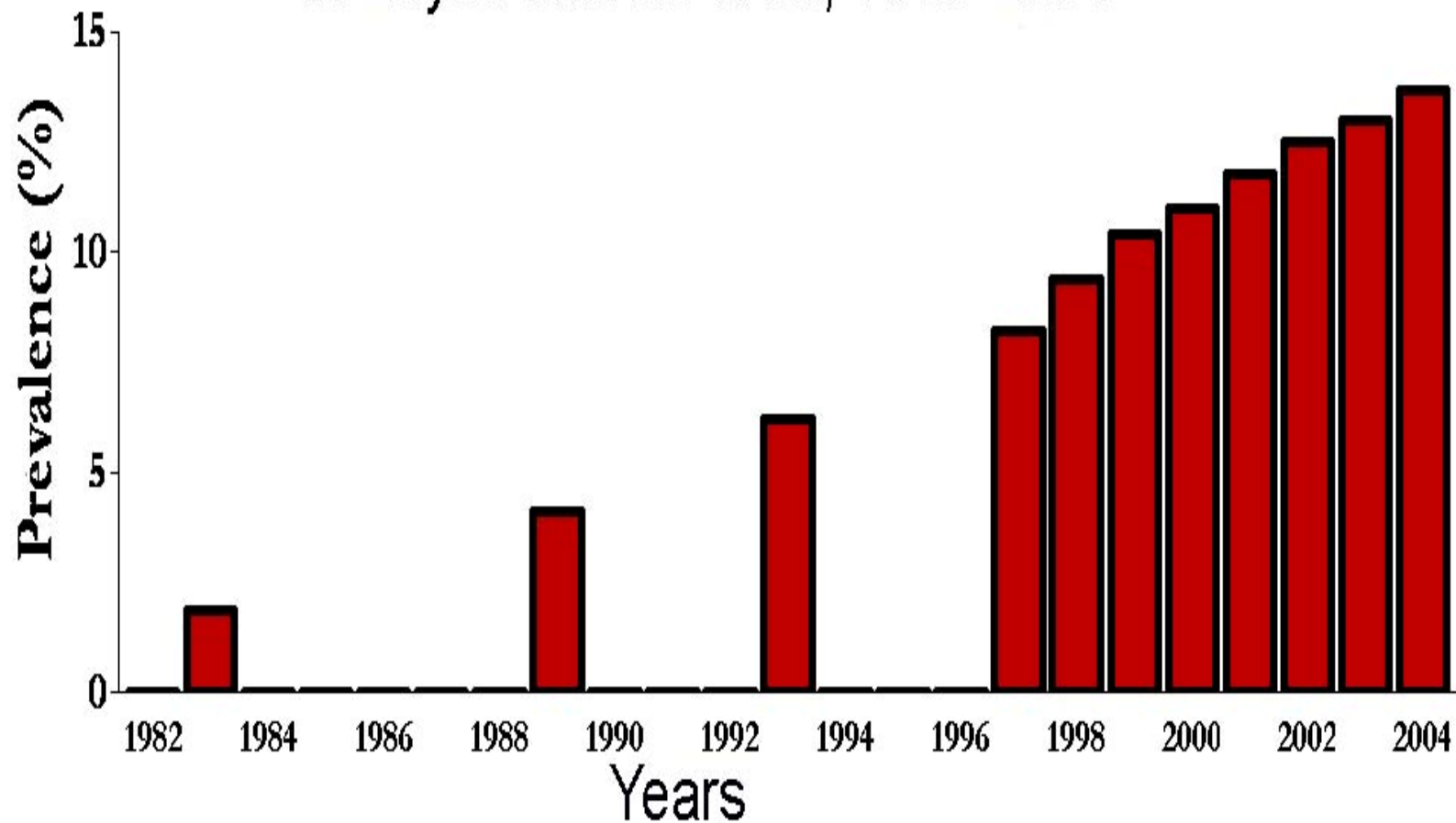
This talk is dedicated to the memory of Elders Sam Awashish,  
Billy Blacksmith, Smally Petawabano and René Coon Come

# Problems addressed by the research project

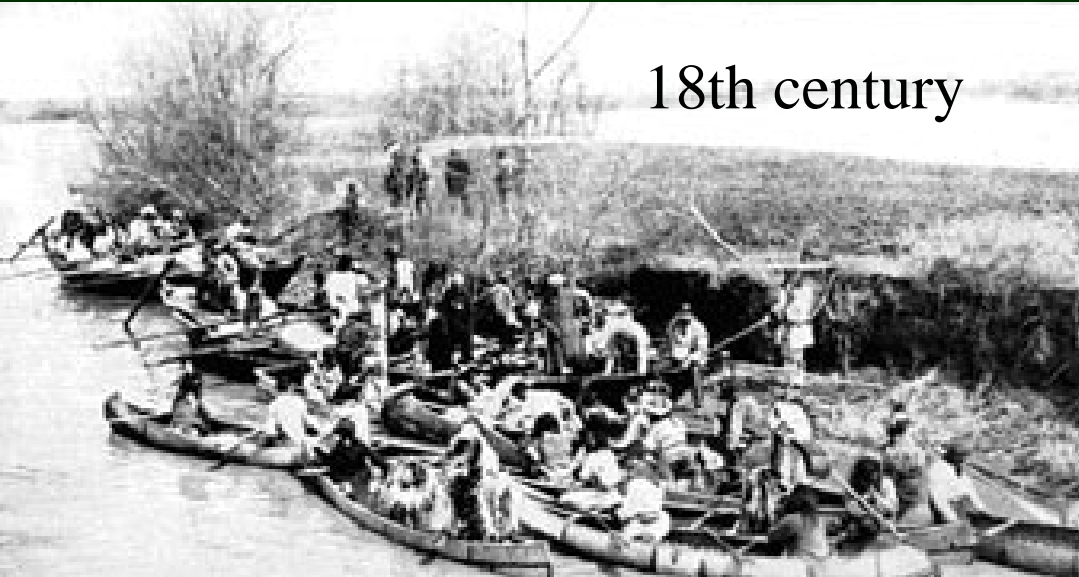
- The near abandonment of Cree healing practices and practitioners;
- The sudden rise of the diabetes 'epidemic' from the 1990s;
- Traditional knowledge/language is being lost;
- Applying the ABS regime in the field;

# The rise of the diabetes 'epidemic'

Raw prevalence of T2D (>15 years old)  
in Eeyou Istchee area, 1983-2004



# Innuu of liyuvischi



18th century



20th century



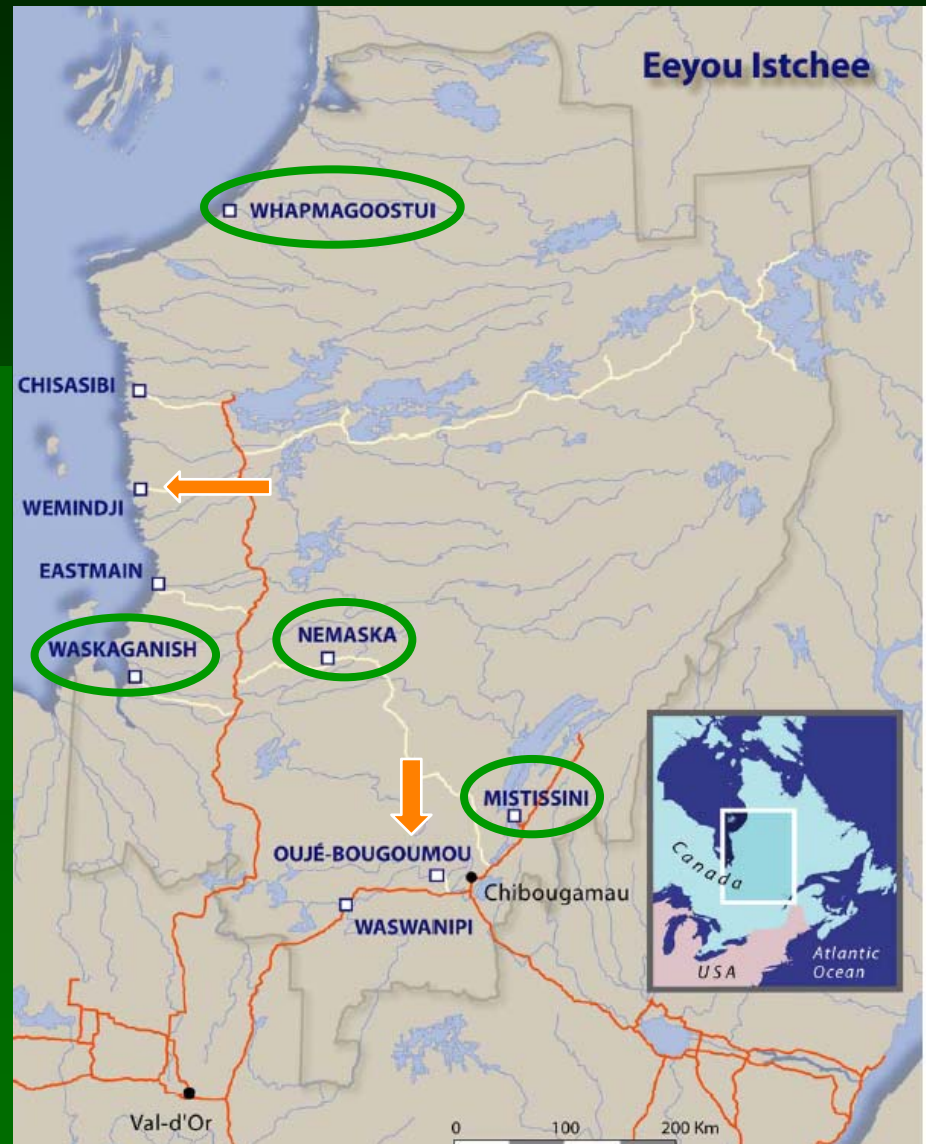
21st century



# The People & their territory: The Eeyouch (Cree) of Eeyou Istchee

## Population

- 15,000 Eeyouch (Cree)
- 9 communities
- 4 communities involved in research project
- 2 new communities





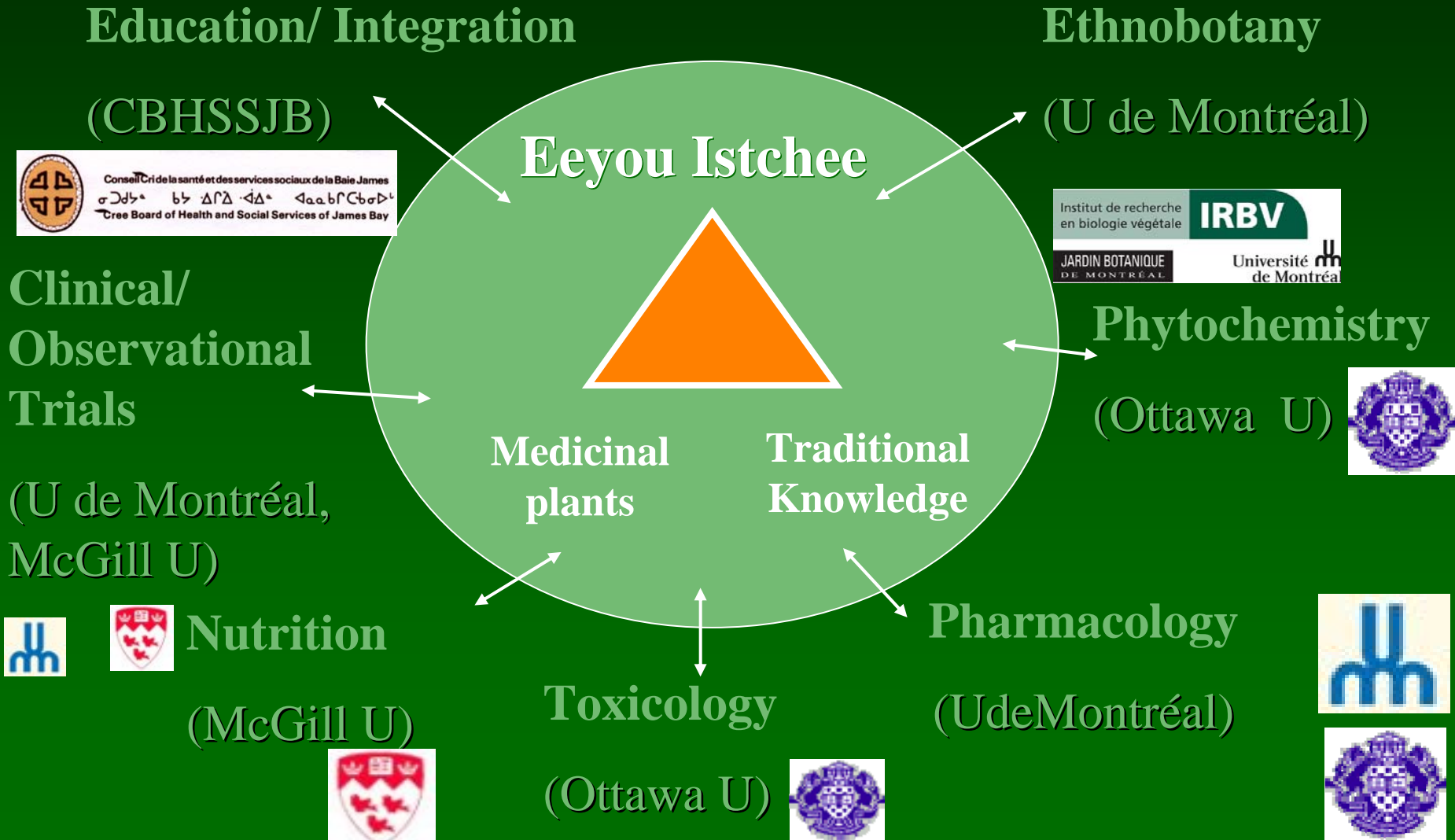
# Actions by the Cree Nation of Mistissini

## Resolution summer 1999

- secure funding to document use of Eeyou medicines;
- ensure safety issues in relation to use of Eeyou medicines;
- promote the use of Eeyou medicines
- promote the transfer of knowledge about Eeyou medicines

**Summer of 2003:** support from the Elder Chief and 18 other Elders for the first ethnobotanical study in Mistissini

# CIHR Team in Aboriginal Antidiabetic Medicines (2003-2006) 2006-2011





James Kawapit

## Main ingredients

- Respect;
- Choice;
- Patience;

## Intangible outcomes

- Pride;
- Language;
- Bounding;









**Ayigadash**



**Kachichepukw**





**Mushkuminanatikw**

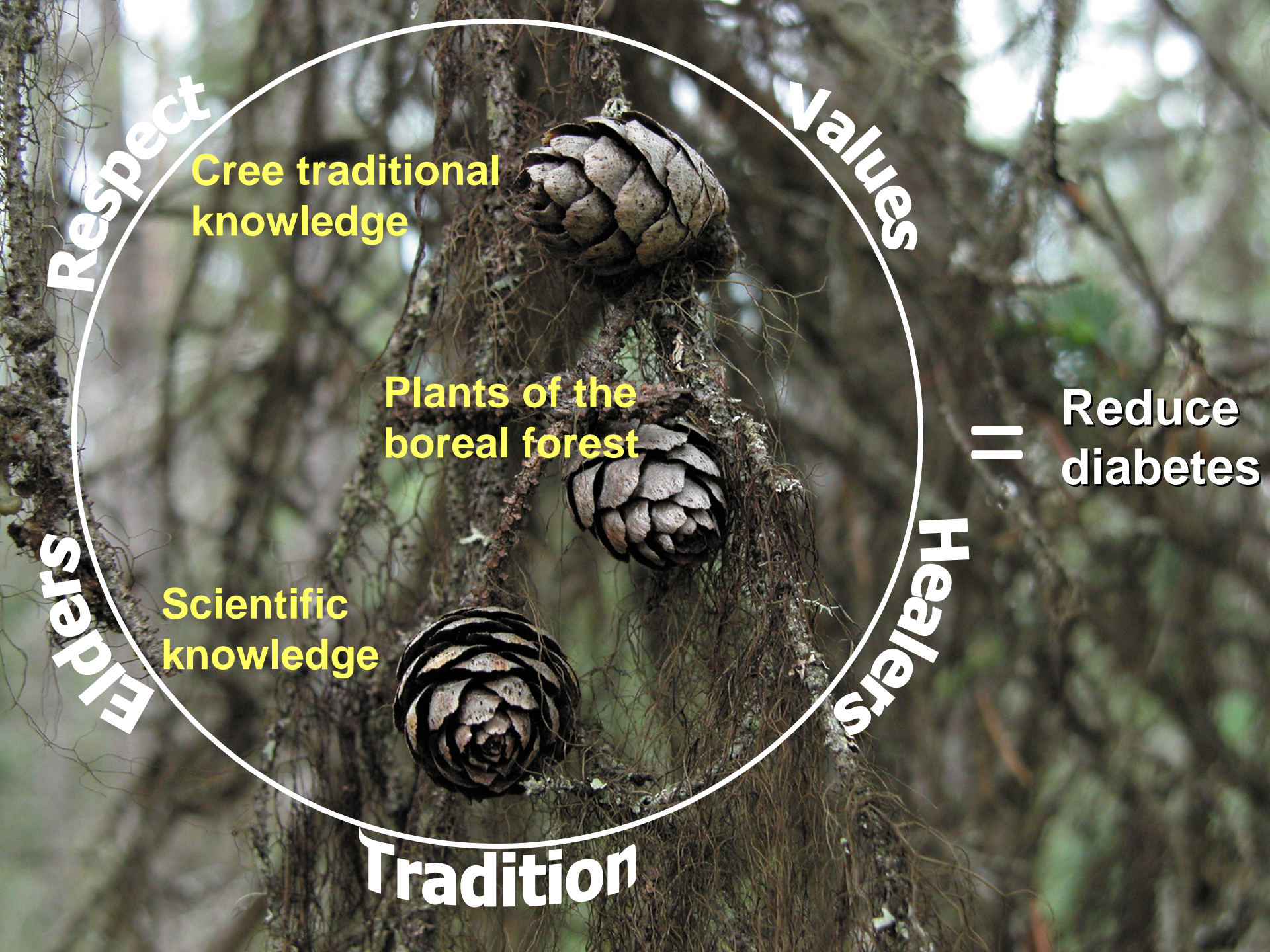
# An ethical approach

- Improve human health : no profit-driven or pharmaceutical companies involved
- Follow CIHR Guidelines for Health Research involving Aboriginal People including notably:
  - Respect for Cree culture and knowledge
  - Transparency about the project with Cree communities
  - Sharing ideas and knowledge (Central role of Elders)  
Steering committee = Cree + Academics
  - Handling plants and their habitats with care  
(e.g. sacred aspect; impact assessment; sustainable development)
  - Apply human research ethics (e.g. Prior Informed Consent – PIC)
  - Protection of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and related Intellectual Property
- Respect Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) principles (Convention on Biodiversity)

# Collaborative research

- Regular meetings
- Planification stage
- Review of publications
- Reports to communities
- Acknowledgement of Elders in publications
- Involved in all stages
- Booklets/posters, herbarium specimens
- Training/apprenticeship
- Help in establishing local TM clinics





**Respect**

**Values**

**Cree traditional knowledge**

**Plants of the boreal forest**

**Reduce diabetes**



**Healers**

**Scientific knowledge**

**Tradition**

**Elders**

# Access?

- Who decide;
- Best practices
  - Payments and royalties?  
(Research Cie using it)
  - Conservation?
- IPRs, patents are foreign notions

# Agreement

Copy of the Research Agreement is available on our website:

<http://www.taam-emaad.umontreal.ca/about%20us/agreement.html>

(Lay language summary available in French, English and Cree (Inland & Coastal))

Paper copies also available upon request



# Nakurmimarialuk Meegwetch

