



25 YEARS

OF CARING FOR THE HOME WE ALL SHARE

CONNECTING WITH THE PAST TO PROTECT THE FUTURE

How we're tackling the
world's wicked problems

Roger Augustine

WHY WESTERN SCIENCE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE NEED EACH OTHER

PLUS

25

PIVOTAL MOMENTS

The projects that have
shaped us into a force for nature

1995-2020



25



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25 PIVOTAL MOMENTS

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ON THE COVER

Knowledge keeper Shirley Alphonse teaches youth to show gratitude and respect for water and the life it sustains



VELMA ORVIS

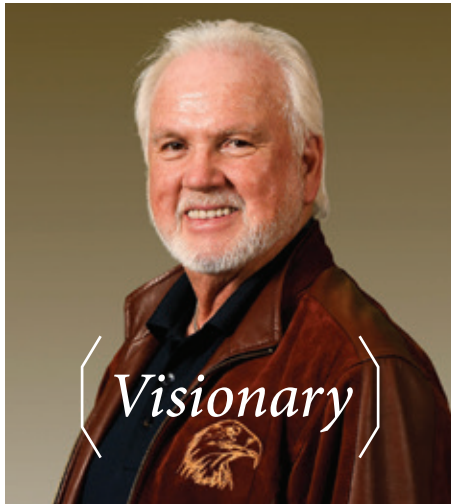
A TRIBUTE

Today, as we celebrate our 25 years of helping Indigenous communities create a sustainable future for us all, we want to pay a special tribute to Velma Orvis, an Ojibway and Cree Elder, and one of the first Elders to be involved with CIER. She was a critical person in the development of CIER and its foundation, providing guidance in creating our sacred space at our first office, which became an important space for listening, learning, and growing – individually and as an organization. As a teacher, Velma was a key support as a knowledge keeper for the students throughout the Environmental and Education Training Program. As we look back at the past 25 years, it was an honour to have Velma walk alongside us as we worked with Indigenous communities to protect the well-being of all living things.

She was described as someone with a kind heart who shared beautiful ideas with people. The words to describe her included “unconditional love” because she worked with various other groups such as End Homelessness Winnipeg, Ka Ni Kanichihk, and Grandmothers Protecting our Children. Her work also brought her into Stoney Mountain Institution to share cultural teachings. She was involved in the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. She has also led cultural naming ceremonies for people, including the executive director and a number of other staff and students of CIER. It is clear that she was loved and appreciated in the various communities of Winnipeg based on the many groups that shared about how much they cared about the work she had done for them when they heard about her passing. Her work will continue through the many lives she has touched with her kindness and teachings.

25 YEARS AGO

By Roger Augustine
CIER Board of Directors
(Chair)



25 years ago, a group of us—we were all Chiefs at that time—were talking about how to address the many serious environmental problems faced by our communities. We knew the significance of grounding initiatives in two knowledge systems—Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science because the problems are complex and environmental issues don't follow

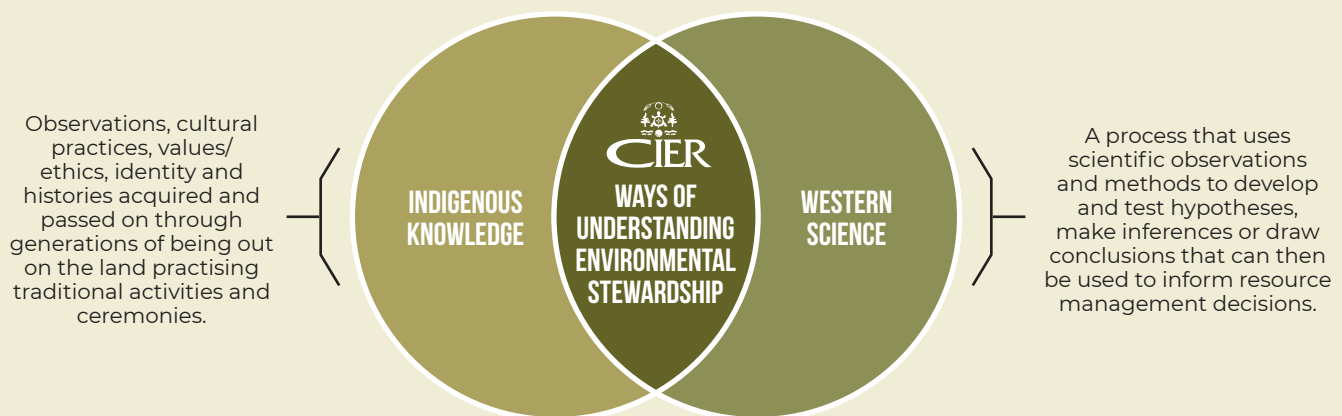
political, cultural or legal boundaries. But, as First Nations our lives and our rights are tied to the natural environment, we feel the immediate and direct effect of resource extraction or hydroelectric development, forest fires or polluted waters. Yet, we have largely been excluded from decisions that are defining our future.

That day, as we put our minds together it became abundantly clear to us that we needed to focus first on building internal capacity in our communities to deal with these issues ourselves. We knew we needed our own institutions! It is critical for reconciliation and decolonization to have Indigenous Peoples building our own institutions that can work in partnership with other organizations and governments in Canada. This idea of our strong institutions that are in relationship with each other is the foundation of change...We all need to decolonize. So, we created a national non-profit organisation, secured charitable status a few years later, and our first initiative was a post-secondary education program. We started with

education because our vision was clear: begin by creating one paid First Nation permanent position in each community focused on addressing their environmental issues. It was as simple as that.

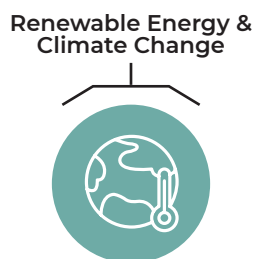
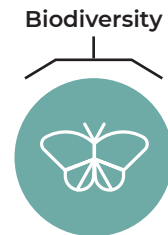
As CIER has grown, we have developed long-term partnerships with communities, funders, and supporters. We have always had both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the organization because we need many types of knowledge and experience to do our work; we use our Indigenous Knowledge systems and the best of what the western world has to offer. Our Board of Directors provides guidance and ensures we are always keeping Indigenous priorities and needs front and centre. And, while we are still working on that goal of one paid staff person in each community, we are driven by our vision of communities controlling our own destiny in protecting and using our lands and waters and building sustainable communities.

Indigenous Peoples have collectively observed land, water and sky for millennia. While Western Science has a lot to learn from this knowledge, over the past 25 years we have witnessed the ways in which Indigenous people have governed and protected their territories for future generations being recognized across Canada.




AT-A-GLANCE

PROJECT FOCUS AREAS



HOW CIER WORKS



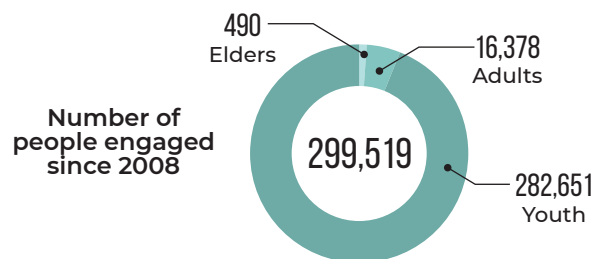
Community members drive projects by determining how they take shape, who in the community leads them, what types of knowledge are incorporated, and which language documents are created. CIER supports the community as requested.

Indigenous communities define and communicate a need to CIER. CIER works directly with Indigenous communities using the best of Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science to develop projects that meet their needs. CIER uses a community driven process to build capacity for the community to lead an initiative, once CIER's role is complete.

CIER initiates a driven process that we believe is important, such as a national workshop or a study to raise awareness, build capacity, foster engagement and/or facilitate opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to connect.

360

Number of Indigenous communities CIER
has worked with over the past 25 years
Per province or territory:



Direct project partnerships,
developing and sharing
information, resources (tools,
studies, presentations,
conferences), and research.

Merrell-Ann Phare, LL.M The Founding Executive Director of CIER on why Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science are key to solving the world's wicked problems.

25 years ago, CIER became Canada's first national Indigenous-led environmental organization.

Why was CIER created? We founded CIER because we knew that Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science could work together to create a sustainable earth, which 25 years ago was quite idealistic. But visionary is what CIER was at its roots and it is how we remain today. Our ability to take risks and be visionary is grounded in our connections with Indigenous communities to tell us what they need, so we can respond accordingly. We are changing the world by listening to Indigenous communities and working directly with them on the ground to tackle wicked problems like climate change, food insecurity, and loss of habitat. It is true that the world is starting to catch up (more and more attention to Indigenous priorities and interests, opportunities for collaboration and research, recognition of Indigenous Knowledge) and as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada reference, we need Indigenous institutions in order to address the legacy of colonization everywhere, especially how it has impacted Indigenous communities and their lands and waters. CIER will continue to care for all living things and work to make a lasting impact on the home we all share. There's still work to be done, and we invite everyone to join our movement.

Think about the next 25 years. What are the most critical issues that Canadians and people around the world face that CIER needs to respond to? CIER will continue to tackle the same wicked problems we've been tackling for the past 25 years, starting with climate change. It's an existential threat that's bigger than any

*Thinker
&
Doer*

one of us individually to be able to handle. It will make all other problems either irrelevant or so much worse. Then there's the terrible issue of poverty. Indigenous people face this more than non-Indigenous people in Canada and it makes dealing with climate change that much more challenging. By providing the resources and seeing opportunities to address environmental and poverty issues together, we can find long term solutions. We need to work through the process of reconciliation and address this massive interracial and intergenerational legacy, but we need to do it in a way that addresses climate change, poverty, and other environmental issues. We need to restore our relationships with the earth at same time as we build relationships with each other. This is the only way to a sustainable future.

Are you optimistic? Do you believe that CIER can make the impact the world needs?

Absolutely, we are a force for nature—funders, donors, partners, and communities are accomplishing so much together. The communities tell us that as we work with them, we are helping them create solutions that work for them. I believe that we can work with enough Indigenous communities to show what a sustainable future looks like in practice. That you can have happy, compassionate and healthy people living in balance with their landscapes, waterscapes, wildlife, etc. while having a good quality of life. We want to show this in enough communities, and with enough partners, that it will go viral somehow. And that it results in humanity and right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous neighbours, and peace between humans and all other species we are supposed to be sharing the planet with.



PIVOTAL MOMENTS

A look at 25 CIER projects that have boosted our trajectory over the years, with highlights from guest writers—the visionaries, leaders, knowledge keepers, supporters, thinkers and doers—who have helped shape and continually inspire us to grow our movement to protect the earth we all share.



INSIDE

WHEN THE EARTH IS HEALTHY,
INDIGENOUS FOODS THRIVE
AND SO DO WE

CLEANING UP
POLLUTING VEHICLES

DECISION-MAKERS
MAKE HISTORY BY SITTING
DOWN TOGETHER

1 ENVIRONMENTAL AND EDUCATION TRAINING 1996-2001

post-secondary accredited environmental studies
| 15 months formal study | 3 months hands-on
experience | 49 First Nation graduates

Partner: University of Manitoba

post-secondary accredited environmental studies

| 15 months formal study | 3 months hands-on
experience | 49 First Nation graduates

Partner: University of Manitoba

This was *the* project that built CIER's approach to Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science working together. The program incorporated the two different knowledge systems taught by an Indigenous scholar, a western scholar, and an Elder, providing First Nation students from across Canada with knowledge and skills to inform environmental protection and management from a Two-Eyed Seeing approach.

It was considered a highly innovative education program as a new and emerging model in the area of collaboration between Indigenous and western knowledge systems within education. It was a proud moment to partner with the University of Manitoba and produce curricula that granted two years towards a four-year undergraduate degree in sciences or humanities.

By Laren Bill Graduate

CIER was a fantastic experience for me. Through it, I had the opportunity to connect with other First Nation youth throughout our territories and together we learned about something that is key to us as

Indigenous Peoples, the land, the water, the environment and the ceremonies. We learned from the people who have always been able to guide us, the Elders. Every day, I apply things that I have learned through CIER in my life and work. I am proud to have had the opportunity to be a part of it. Congratulations to CIER on celebrating its 25th anniversary. It is an incredible accomplishment.

Laren Bill is the Chairperson of the Implementation Monitoring Committee for Treaty Land Entitlement in Manitoba.



By Melissa Hotain Graduate

As a single mother I spent my time in Winnipeg in the program and travelled back to Brandon where my Mother was caring for my small children. It was a sacrifice to be away from home, but I had a feeling that this program was going to take me places, and it did. I was fortunate to travel to northern Quebec to spend time with the Crees of James Bay learning the impacts of hydro development to their lands and way of life. I spent time at Riding Mountain National Park and the Experimental Lakes Area in Ontario learning both Indigenous and Western Science. I was privileged to spend time with Elders from across Canada that came to share their knowledge and teachings. Most importantly I made some long-lasting dear friends that I remain in contact with today. We often reflect on the CIER days, reminiscing and laughing at our adventures in and out of the classroom.

My final practicum at Green Spirit Environment, a First Nation consulting firm in Calgary, Alberta furthered my experience, which led to a short time with Indian Oil and Gas Canada. After moving home and being elected to Council for my First Nation, I spent 10 years as an Environmental Policy Analyst with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and most recently two years with the Assembly of First Nations as a Project Coordinator then Senior Policy Analyst on Water Issues. However, home is where the heart is, and I find myself back in my First Nation working as a Director of Intergovernmental Affairs leading our self-government department. I truly believe that everything happens for a reason, and CIER was a part of my lifelong journey and the experiences I have been blessed with.

Knowledge Keeper



2

PATHFINDERS CAPACITY BUILDING 2004-2013

800+ communication, outreach and education products distributed | 15 community energy baseline studies | 3 project databases | 1 regional network of community champions | 3 environmental contaminants sampling training sessions



What about Pathfinders? It's a common question that we ask at CIER when we talk about raising awareness and building capacity in partnership with Indigenous communities. Pathfinders is a national train-the-trainer model that started out of the federal *Aboriginal and Northern Communities Action Program* for communities to participate in climate change action. For almost a decade, CIER was a Pathfinder in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy, species at risk and environmental contaminants for First Nations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Today, we still look back to the resources that were developed as a template to guide similar work with Indigenous communities to build sustainable communities and protect lands and waters for future generations.



3

INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING 2006-2008

3 community meetings | 3 community training sessions | 4 modules developed | 1 CyberTracker database | 1 community Environmental Guardian hired

Partner: Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation



Anyone who works for a not-for-profit knows that the work moves in waves. Most often, we're fully focused on the work, work, work. But sometimes we need to look up and see the bigger picture. This was one of those moments for CIER. So, between 2004-2005 we met with First Nations and First Nation organisations to assess the needs of First Nations. We realized we needed to undergo targeted development in the type of work we could offer to First Nations, and our own internal institutional development.

One of the targeted areas was the development of an Indigenous Environmental Monitoring Project, created to assist First Nations in protecting their territory using an environmental tracking software program that incorporated Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Western Science (WS) to track changes in the environment. As part of this project, CIER circulated a national survey to understand if First Nations support the use of IK and WS being used to monitor the environment, or just one or the other. The majority (87%) of respondents preferred the use of both, heavily emphasizing the importance of IK through additional comments.

Since this project, CIER has developed two subsequent initiatives built upon this work, including an Indigenous Community-Based Monitoring project in Northern Ontario.

60
First Nations

30
First Nation
organizations

4

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE STUDIES 2012-2014

136 community members | 8 workshops | 59 interviews

Partners: Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, Wasagamack First Nation, St. Theresa Point First Nation



Transportation services between four communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and access to a major provincial road remain limited due to lack of winter road accessibility.

We sat down with big maps and markers, and talked to Elders, trappers, hunters and knowledge holders to document trapping, hunting, fishing and gathering activities. We collected information on cultural resources, special areas, vegetation, wildlife and fisheries that were within Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority's (MFESRA) project study area.

The information will help determine the best place to construct all season road connections between the communities and to a major provincial road—opening doors for people to travel throughout the area 365 days a year.

Conducting Indigenous Knowledge studies entails a certain process, a particular set of skills, and a level of cultural awareness that CIER has established over the years.



6

PLANT AND ANIMAL FIELD GUIDES 2009, 2019

3 community visits | 1 workshop | 19 interviews | 4 field trips | 20+ Elders & Knowledge Keepers | 25+ students | 2 field guides

Partners: Mikisew Cree First Nation | Sioux Valley Dakota Nation | Nature Manitoba



Indigenous communities have close cultural ties to their lands and the plants and animals that live on it. But how do you connect with the land when habitats are being destroyed and birds are going extinct—especially when Elders with the wealth of knowledge about plant and animal life in the area are passing away before it can be shared with future generations? CIER worked with Elders and youth in Alberta and Manitoba to develop field guides that rely on their traditional languages to help them protect their ancestral lands and the plants and birds that live there, while strengthening their cultural connections to them.

5

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION TOOLKIT 2005, 2020

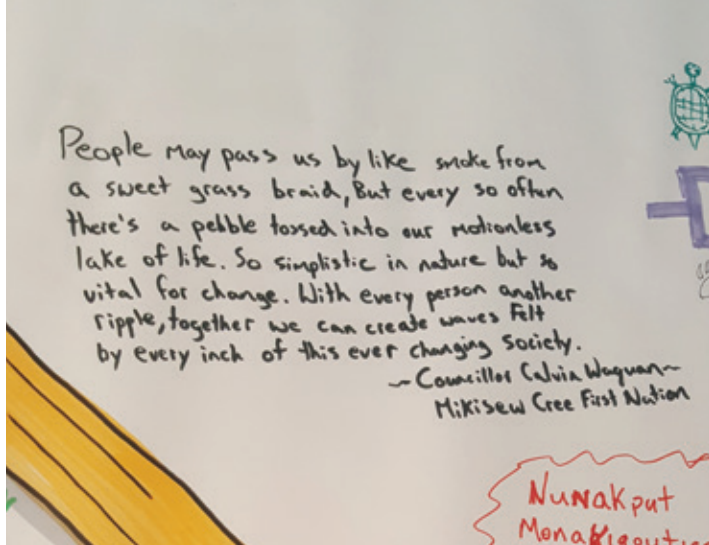
4 community visits | 35 Elders, teachers & Knowledge Keepers involved in the development of Indigenous language glossaries | 6 member steering committee | 13 community stories | 1 toolkit

Partners: Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Deschambault Lake Community of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation



Indigenous Peoples in Canada rely on the environment for economic and cultural strength. Finding tools to adapt to the impacts of climate change is vital. CIER created Guidebooks that 'walk and talk' an Indigenous government through the process of engaging community members in discussions about the impacts of climate change, finding solutions, tracking progress, and staying on top of their needs as our climate crisis grows. Fifteen years later, needs have evolved. So, CIER expanded the toolkit to include information on the latest impacts of climate change (forest fires, winter roads, and floods), real-life examples of how Indigenous governments are adapting to these climate change threats, and a workbook to help communities create an Indigenous language glossary focused on climate change and the environment.





7 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE MONITORING SYMPOSIUM

26 Elders | 18 youth | 7 presentations on ICBCM initiatives | 1 youth keynote presentation | 2 sets of panelists to share stories and reflections | 8 presentations on Federal programs | 3 break-out sessions | 1 networking session

Folks from coast to coast to coast came together to talk about climate change issues affecting Indigenous communities. For two days, the room was buzzing with shared experiences, ideas, and creative exchange. It was a beautiful orchestra of perspectives from Indigenous youth, Elders, and technicians reflecting on what climate change means in traditional languages and the connections between different knowledge systems to data collection, management and analysis, and key challenges and opportunities for Indigenous community-based climate monitoring (ICBCM).

We left armed with facts and stats about regional priorities, monitoring project/program ideas, and possible partnerships/collaborations to support CIER's ICBCM work and to inform the federal government's national programming and funding. This led the federal government to conduct further research on how to advance ICBCM and support communities by putting them in the 'driver's seat' as they move forward with these initiatives.

130 participants

8 SHINING LIGHTS WORKSHOPS 2019

3 workshops | 56 participants | 22 communities

Partners: Pembina Institute, Arctic Energy Alliance

By Shianne McKay, Bsc.
Senior Project Manager, CIER



Indigenous women and youth let their light shine during a set of workshops focused on reducing reliance on diesel fuels. The workshop highlighted actions to reduce energy consumption in the homes by making changes to save money, conserve heat and energy, and preserve the environment. My favorite moment was when we were sitting with the Elders, translators, youth and women as they drew and translated key energy terms. There was so much laughter and sharing of stories. Participants went home excited to share their knowledge. Many have since created presentations to raise awareness about energy efficiency in their home communities across the Northwest Territories.

9

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE 2017-PRESENT

11 First Nations | 16 municipalities | 28 leaders

Partners: Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.



The *status quo is not good enough*. This is the mantra of the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI). It is the statement that first established common ground between Indigenous and local government leaders in southern Manitoba in 2017, and it is a constant reminder for these leaders to continue pushing boundaries as they blaze the trail of reconciliation together.

The 28 Chiefs, Mayors, and Reeves who comprise the CLI are sitting together at a shared decision-making table, as governments, for the first time in 153 years. They have learned about each other's histories, cultures, and perspectives. They have built trust and mutual understanding. Along the way, they realized that they share many of the same goals for their communities—healthy lands and waters, strong local economies, and resilient infrastructure—and that they can better achieve these goals by working together.

CIER and our partners first helped build understanding and strong relationships by guiding the CLI leaders through a structured reconciliation process. In 2019, we supported the signing of a historic Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that commits the CLI leaders to work together for years to come. As part of this momentous moment, there was an exchange of the exact replica of the Treaty 1 medal, symbolizing the relationship we should have had and closing the circle on the original treaty relationship. Now we are supporting the CLI leaders as they implement innovative regional solutions to some of the most intractable water, land, economic, and waste challenges facing their communities.



By Chief Karen Batson
Pine Creek First Nation

Visionary

*“The path to healing requires
new, better relationships.”*



We have entered an era of reconciliation. The colonial relationships of the past harmed Indigenous communities in so many ways. I think people are now realizing that the path to healing requires us to create new, better relationships.

Indigenous leaders have been increasingly vocal and active in trying to create change, but we also realize that we cannot do it alone. In order to create more opportunities for our people, we need to branch out and form partnerships with people, organizations, and governments outside of our communities.

CLI is allowing us to build new relationships and strong bonds with our municipal neighbours. This is the way forward; this is how we can achieve economic development while protecting our lands, waters, and resources.

By Mayor Clive Hinds
Town of Stonewall

Leader

*“We can do this while leaving
no community behind.”*



CLI has been a tremendous education experience. Personally, I learned that so much of what I thought and presumed about First Nation communities was incorrect. Building a common understanding has helped us all establish trust and respect for one another.

We are each representing our own community and need to stay true to who we are. I always seek to safeguard Stonewall's autonomy and represent Stonewallers' best interests. But I can do this while also reaching out beyond our borders to work with other municipal and First Nation communities.

Breaking bread with other leaders at the CLI table is a great way to ensure we are all achieving the best outcomes for our communities. And we can do this, together, while leaving no community behind.

The initial conversation between the Indigenous leaders and the Municipal leaders, which started as a humble path towards reconciliation, has now become a roadway of possibilities. My hope is that the year 2021 will certainly lend us greater opportunities for funding the projects that benefit us all.

By Elder Stan McKay
Fisher River First Nation

Elder

*“I could feel a positive energy as
soon as I stepped into the room.”*



I was a little bit skeptical coming into the first gathering of the CLI leaders. My experience tells me that it is difficult to start off on the right foot with initiatives like these. We have a long history of misunderstanding each other, which creates all sorts of problems.

But CLI was different. I could feel a positive energy as soon as I stepped into the room on that first day. It felt like there was a lot of potential, right from the start, to work together in new ways. From there we moved fairly quickly into a trusting relationship, and that trust has continued to grow every time we get together.

10

WOODLAND CARIBOU RECOVERY 2014-2015

9 interviews | 13 caribou action plan documents reviewed | 40 national media hits

Partner: Boreal Leadership Council

Photo: Valerie Courtois

Draw on this line where you have seen the caribou migrate. Are they male or female? Do they look healthy? Where did they go after the forest fire? These are the kinds of questions communities ask when they collect and analyze information provided by Elders, hunters and Indigenous Knowledge holders—the people who live on the land and whose observations will help form strategies to protect Canada's once-thriving caribou herds.

For several decades, concerns have been raised about the effects of human activities and climate change on caribou populations and how best to manage a species that seems to be losing a battle of survival in an ever-changing world. Through their close connection to the lands and waters, Indigenous Peoples have noticed changes to the animal populations their livelihoods rely on and some have implemented changes to safeguard these animals, which can mean sacrificing their own traditional lifestyles and sharing these traditions with the next generation.

As leaders in caribou conservation, this initiative, in partnership with the Boreal Leadership Council, focused on conducting a cross-country review of Indigenous-led caribou action planning. The goal was to understand existing or developing approaches, raise awareness of how Indigenous Peoples are protecting caribou, and help create connections and collaborative opportunities on caribou action planning in Canada's Boreal.

11

250,000
students

EARTH RANGERS EDUCATION 2016-2019

Partner: Earth Rangers

In the spirit of reconciliation and building relationships, CIER continues to partner with non-Indigenous organizations to reach non-Indigenous audiences. We first partnered with Earth Rangers to develop an Indigenous Knowledge (IK) mission for their badge program, which reaches 140,000 members from across Canada. For this mission, children talked to an Elder about IK and created a drawing of an animal from one of the teachings, such as the Bald Eagle that represents love. It was a great collaboration that grew into Indigenizing Earth Rangers' School Assembly programs for Grades 1-6 with IK content for climate change and sustainable waste management. Now, IK permeates throughout as young conservationists across Canada learn about the most critical environmental challenges of our time and take action to help the planet, knowing that the things they do today will matter tomorrow.

12

QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY 2007-2010

Partners: Xa'Xtsa First Nation, Fond Du Lac Denesųłiné First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Métis Local #125, God's Lake First Nation, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach

Good quality of life is a cornerstone of community well-being and long-term sustainability. But what is 'good' quality of life? A literature review and analysis, perspectives from six remote communities in provinces across Canada, and the creation of a quality of life conceptual framework, revealed a set of recommendations related to programs, policies and funding for remote communities and direction for the federal government's Sustainable Development Strategy.

13

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSHOPS 2016-ONGOING

10 presentations | 4 break-out sessions | 14 graphic illustrations | 1 final report | 1 updated website with 12 Indigenous climate change projects south of 60°

60+
participants

*“I want to start a
climate change initiative.
How do I get started?”*



Climate change doesn't respect boundaries—it affects Indigenous communities both north and south of 60°. CIER led a workshop to bring together Manitoba First Nations south of 60° to discuss climate change and health impacts, their adaptation needs and priorities, and to share information about funding opportunities. It was two days of sharing, learning, creative thinking, and networking that inspired a huge influx of Manitoba First Nations to apply for funding. CIER updated the climatetelling.info website to include projects south of 60°, serving as a resource for communities across Canada who are asking themselves...“I want to start a climate change initiative. How do I get started? What other projects have communities done?”



14

ELDER-LED ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAM 2017-PRESENT

60 participants | 10 Elders

Partner: Pine Creek First Nation



Traditional crafts and teachings can get lost between generations because Elders and students find it hard to meet the time and financial commitments needed to keep their culture alive. CIER and Pine Creek First Nation worked together to change that. We bought supplies and hired Elders to share their crafts and teachings with community members. As they worked together to craft dreamcatchers, make traditional hand drums and sew moccasins and starblankets, we saw relationships strengthen, new skills emerge, and cultural connections revitalize.

CIER cares for all living things, which includes strengthening the link between culture and environment. This heart-warming project was a reminder of these connections as the hand-drum brought the heartbeat of Mother Earth and moccasins were made with supplies taken from the land. It evoked the power of arts to foster healing through storytelling, preserve stories and pass down traditional skills. Many of these crafts and skills are of economic benefit to the community, and the relationships that form are invaluable.

HEALTHCARE
EDUCATION
HOUSING
FOOD
LANGUAGE



END OF LIFE VEHICLES WASTE MANAGEMENT 2017-2020

2000+ vehicles depolluted & removed

Partners: St. Theresa Point First Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, Wasagamack First Nation



By Kristy Anderson, Msc.
Research Associate, CIER



I can remember flying with my Dad over a remote northern First Nation close to where I grew up and seeing so many end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) piled up in community space and people's yards. With CIER I've been able to make a difference by supporting remote northern First Nations as they safely depollute, crush and remove ELVs from their communities. Vehicles in remote northern First Nations have nowhere to go when the vehicle no longer works. These ELVs have been piling up in community spaces and posing risks to the land, water and community health for decades...until now. St. Theresa Point, Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations are collecting, depolluting, and crushing ELVs. The ELVs are stored in local scrap yards where they wait until they can be transported during the winter on the ice roads to southern Manitoba to be recycled. The metal recyclers pay for the scrap metal, which supports the First Nations to pay for the ELV collection, depollution, crushing and shipping process.

The ELV work has already resulted in the safe removal of thousands of ELVs from these remote northern First Nations. It's been a privilege to support this work and see the difference this project is making!



16

SAKAW'NEHIYAWAK: PROVIDING WARMTH TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH 2016-2018

22 children outfitted

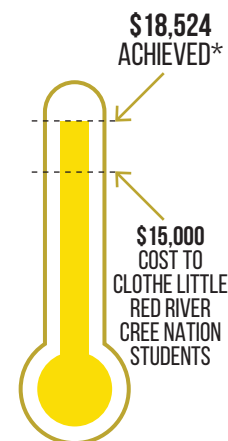
Partners: United Church of Canada Gifts With Vision, Little Red River Cree Nation

Some Indigenous children do not get to be outdoors simply because they don't have the proper outerwear to weather harsh winter temperatures that can drop below -50 degrees Celsius. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is intrinsically tied to nature and the outdoors. Children need warm clothing to learn traditional ways and connect with their culture.

CIER partnered with the United Church of Canada to clothe youth from Garden River in Little Red River Cree Nation (LRRCN), so that they could participate in an outdoor education program

where they learned the Cree language, cultural practices like tanning hides, and environmental knowledge from Elders and teachers. Through your generous donations to the Gifts with Vision catalogue, we purchased winter jackets that were embroidered with the LRRCN logo, ski-pants, toques, mitts, and winter boots!

This was a rare moment where CIER went directly to the public to fundraise for this project to help outfit youth. It was a very positive fundraising experience that introduced us to new supporters who joined our movement to keep IK alive.



*Extra funds were used to buy seasonal clothing for students participating in the Fox Lake Cree Nation outdoor education program.

17

WATER GOVERNANCE REVIEW AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 2015-2019

200 First Nations | 5 social water network maps

Partners: First Nations Fisheries Council of BC, POLIS

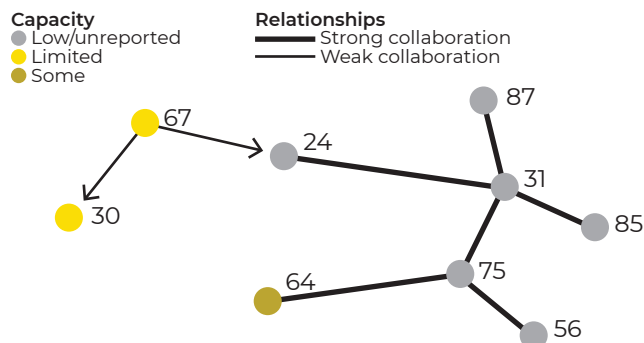
25%
PERCENTAGE OF BC FIRST NATIONS SURVEYED

Governance simply means 'how we make decisions.' Indigenous water/watershed plans are increasingly important to enable communities in developing protocols and policies that guide their communities' decisions and actions to protect their traditional values, laws, title and rights. We worked with

First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) to connect with First Nations in different ways to learn about capacity gaps and conditions needed for First Nations to engage in shaping the future of a new collaborative and respectful watershed co-governance regime in British Columbia.

As experiences and perspectives were shared, a web of connections was made into a set of social network maps—who works with who, who

Social network maps show who knows who, and who has the capacity to work together:



knows who, who has capacity, where there are opportunities to work together. These maps revealed gaps and, most significantly, opportunities for a joint CIER-POLIS program to leverage our strengths and networks. The program was born and we began to steer conversations and partnerships across difficult terrain to discuss challenging water governance issues and work together on solving some pretty big hairy audacious goals.

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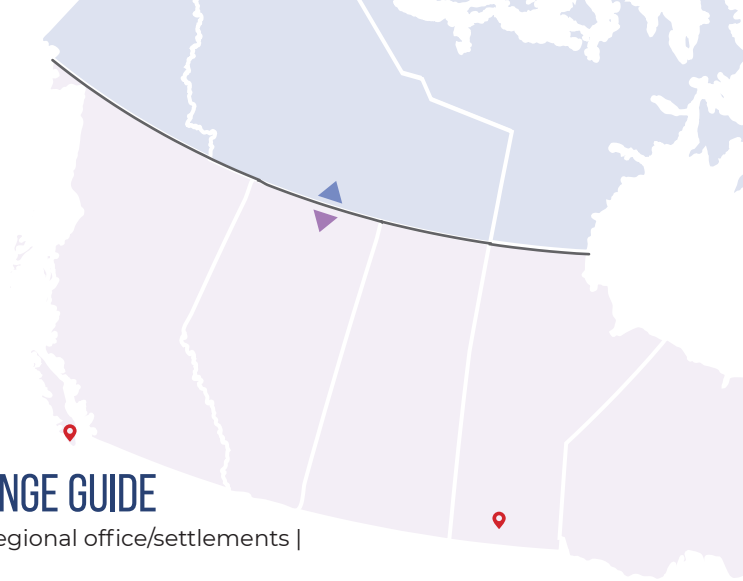
CLIMATE RISKS AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITY PLANNING 2007-2011

NORTH OF 60°

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE GUIDE

42 participants | 12 communities | 7 regional office/settlements |
4 NGOs | 3 territorial governments

Partner: Summit Enterprises International Inc.



What is Risk Management?

Risk Management is a simple and highly-effective approach for identifying risks, ranking them, and then selecting the best way to reduce those risks. It is a quick process that results in a clear picture of the complexity of an issue, and how best to deal with it. It can be applied to all kinds of situations.

By Sjoerd van der Wielen
Senior Project Manager, CIER



In my work in the Northwest Territories, I came to see that communities and all activities throughout the North are being affected by the impacts of climate change. In fact, I dare say that the scope of the impact is not matched anywhere else in the world or at least not in Canada. It touched me deeply that the people who contributed so little to climate change are hit the hardest with it. I am proud to be working for an organization that helps northern communities. Northern regional and community governments are looking at these issues and working to be more

proactive in making decisions that help manage these risks. To support these efforts, alongside our partner Summit Enterprises International Inc., we developed *Adapting to Climate Change: A Risk-based Guide for Arctic and Northern Communities*. The Guide outlines a process for approaching climate adaptation issues in Indigenous communities north of 60°.



To ensure this Guide would be useful for communities across the North, CIER brought together folks from Indigenous communities in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut for a 3-day workshop to test and refine the Guide. Through a series of activities, we received invaluable feedback and the Guide was revised into two volumes:

- Volume 1: Climate Change Risk Management Process
- Volume 2: Northern Examples of Working through the Process

The first volume includes a step-by-step approach that walks a community through the framework. The second volume includes a workbook section that contains templates for recording information to help with presenting the results in a clear manner that can be easily understood. An interactive website was also developed based on the Guide to engage and support Indigenous communities with climate change adaptation initiatives.

This opportunity increased CIER's capacity to assist Indigenous communities north of 60° in adapting to climate change by increasing our knowledge about the risk management process, learning about climate change impacts north of 60°, and building our network with Indigenous communities and organizations from different regions across Canada.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT REPORT

25+ phone interviews | 115 survey respondents | 2 advisory committee meetings

Partners: University of British Columbia, Potlotek First Nation, Swan Lake First Nation, T'Sou-ke First Nation, Cree Nation of Waskaganish

SOUTH OF 60°

“Climate change is something where if we were able to get together, educate everyone on what we can do to lessen our use of fossil fuels, what we can do individually to help with long term sustainability, is more dire than anything.”

— CHIEF PLANES, T'SOU-KE FIRST NATION, WEBCAST

By Kate Cave

Senior Project Manager, CIER



When I first started at CIER six years ago, I kept hearing, “You should really read this report.” Five pages in, it became clear why my new colleagues were encouraging me to get up to speed on the struggles communities were facing south of 60°. While I was aware that Indigenous Peoples are among those in Canada considered at greater risk to climate change, I didn’t realize the disparities in the efforts to help communities document and build capacity to adapt to current climate changes in the north versus south of the 60th parallel.

But climate change doesn’t respect boundaries and these disparities are real. It is happening south of 60° and this scarcity of information about the threats Indigenous communities face puts them at great risk. How often do you hear in the news about the ice melting and people being unable to use winter roads to get to a doctor’s appointment in the city? Or the loss of habitat from forest fires, impacting traditional livelihood activities that have both cultural and economic implications for well-being and survival?

This report was one of several created over a decade ago to raise awareness about these ongoing issues south of 60°. Over the course of a 3 year multi-phased project, CIER engaged with First Nations from across Canada through phone interviews, surveys, community visits, and an advisory committee, to understand how climate change is impacting communities, what their priorities are and how they are or can develop climate change adaptation strategies.

Several key themes emerged, among them, the importance of:

- Historical experiences and understanding how they may influence an Indigenous community’s ability to adapt to climate change
- Indigenous Knowledge and strengthening the bonds between Elders who had their culture taken away and youth who often struggle to know what theirs is
- Understanding the role of community leadership and the relationships with other levels of government and organizations and how they impact on the ways communities address climate change or at the very least to develop the capacity to deal with it.

What we learned over a decade ago we still apply to numerous projects today, as we continue to do our part by supporting Indigenous communities across Canada in their efforts to understand the effects of climate change.

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WETLAND MONITORING AND RESTORATION 2015-2018

5 people trained in community-based monitoring
1 Wetland Restoration Planning workshop with 18 participants
1 restoration plan | 1 purple loosestrife control program
8 community members involved in river bank restoration

Partners: Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Living Lakes Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada – Native Plant Solutions, Lake Winnipeg Foundation Science Advisory Council, Native Orchid Conservation Inc.



Approximately 70 kilometers north of the City of Winnipeg lies a unique ecosystem the size of 70,000 football fields. It includes Brokenhead Ojibway Nation (BON) and the Brokenhead Wetland Ecological Reserve. BON has used this ecosystem for cultural and hunting practices for over 300 years, but today it has great concerns: flooding and erosion of stream and riverbanks of the Brokenhead River, invasive species, and increases in excess nutrients and pollutants from development surrounding Lake Winnipeg.

This project came to life with community engagement, hands-on training, and restoration planning and activities to improve the health of the Brokenhead Wetland and ensure it remains as a sieve for Lake Winnipeg and a healthy resource for the people of BON.



20

INDIGENOUS FOOD FIRST! 2011-2012

2 x 3-day workshops | 11 youth participants | 1 IFF website
dozens of fact sheets, recipes and how-to guides

Partners: T'Sou-ke First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation



When the earth is healthy, Indigenous foods thrive and so do we. But climate change is threatening our food supply. With shorter winter seasons and a dependence on winter roads, transporting food to northern communities is increasingly more expensive. With threats to the lands and waters, our ability to sustain ourselves is becoming further constrained.

Indigenous food sovereignty is a part of our vision of sustainable Indigenous communities and a healthy environment. Plus, it's critical to Indigenous well-being.

We seek projects that instill wonder and curiosity in our youth and inspire them to immerse themselves in their cultures and become our future leaders. Indigenous Food First! (IFF) equips youth with the know-how to protect the earth and Indigenous foods. We launched the program with workshops in Manitoba and British Columbia, but IFF creates a global space for Indigenous youth with iffculture.ca—a place to share their voices about foods integral to their cultures and health, interact with resources to build awareness, and take action to protect the environment and their traditional foods.

21

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GUIDEBOOKS 2009-2011

6 guidebooks | 12 interviews | 1 workshop
4 webinars | 5 conference presentations

Partners: Hupačasath First Nation,
Mikisew Cree First Nation Government and Industry Relations,
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources



Many existing watershed planning frameworks are based on western knowledge and worldviews, resulting in plans and activities that are largely not relevant or respectful of First Nations and their knowledge. This project took an innovative approach to filling a critical gap in protecting and managing landscapes: having First Nations lead the way in watershed planning in their territories.

The series of publicly-available guidebooks is filled with activities, tips, and real-word examples from our First Nation partners' own experiences.



22

FISH HABITAT PROGRAM 2007-2012

4 regional meetings | 1 discussion workbook
3 fact sheets | 6 workshops/courses
3 interactive youth educational activities
3 proposal submissions

Partners: Southern Chiefs Organization,
Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation, Poplar River First
Nation, Hollow Water First Nation, Pine Creek First
Nation, Peguis First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation,
Skownan First Nation, Northlands Dené First Nation



Fish need healthy places to live, feed, and reproduce, and corridors to migrate between these places. Without this, fish populations suffer, resulting in a lack of traditional foods for First Nations. What makes a fish habitat healthy? How do we assess the health of habitats? How do we preserve, improve and manage fish habitats? CIER worked with First Nations to provide training and skills to protect fish habitats and keep fish populations healthy for future generations.

HYDRO-CLIMATIC MONITORING ROADMAP 2015-2019

260 references | 44 surveys | 3 interviews | 1 publication

Partners: ESSA, Dehcho First Nations, Matabwa First Nations Management



Environment Canada's Collaborative Monitoring Initiative represents a unique opportunity to support Indigenous communities to gain greater access and contribute to a national monitoring network, while improving their own water and climate data for use in stewardship initiatives that address issues like flooding, ecosystem protection, and the preservation of cultural practices. To foster these opportunities, CIER reached out to learn about (1) What's needed to ensure Indigenous communities can participate in, and benefit from, the collection, management, sharing

and use of water and climate monitoring information for Indigenous environmental stewardship; and, (2) Develop a framework that improves collaboration and decision-making around monitoring climate and water. While there's no single best recipe for developing a monitoring framework and no two Indigenous communities are the same, we created a roadmap for how to build an overarching framework that is grounded in different knowledge systems, decision-oriented, replicable and scalable.

“This initiative provided a valuable opportunity for our emerging Guardians Network to collaborate with knowledgeable researchers, directly contributing to the vision and design of effective and sustainable monitoring programs in our member First Nation homelands. We truly value our partnership with CIER and look forward to ongoing and future collaborations.”

— SARAH COCKERTON,
MANAGER, FOUR RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES GROUP,
MATABWA FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT

“It was a great experience working with CIER, they added the capacity needed to develop a Hydro climactic monitoring plan that works for the Dehcho.”

— MIKE LOW,
DEHCHO AAROM COORDINATOR,
DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS

COMMUNITY PLANNING 2012-2016

10 planning meetings with Elders, youth staff and/or Chief and Council | 2 community events | 1 community planning communication survey | 1 community engagement strategy | 1 community planning vision map | 1 State of the Nation report

Partner: Fort Albany First Nation



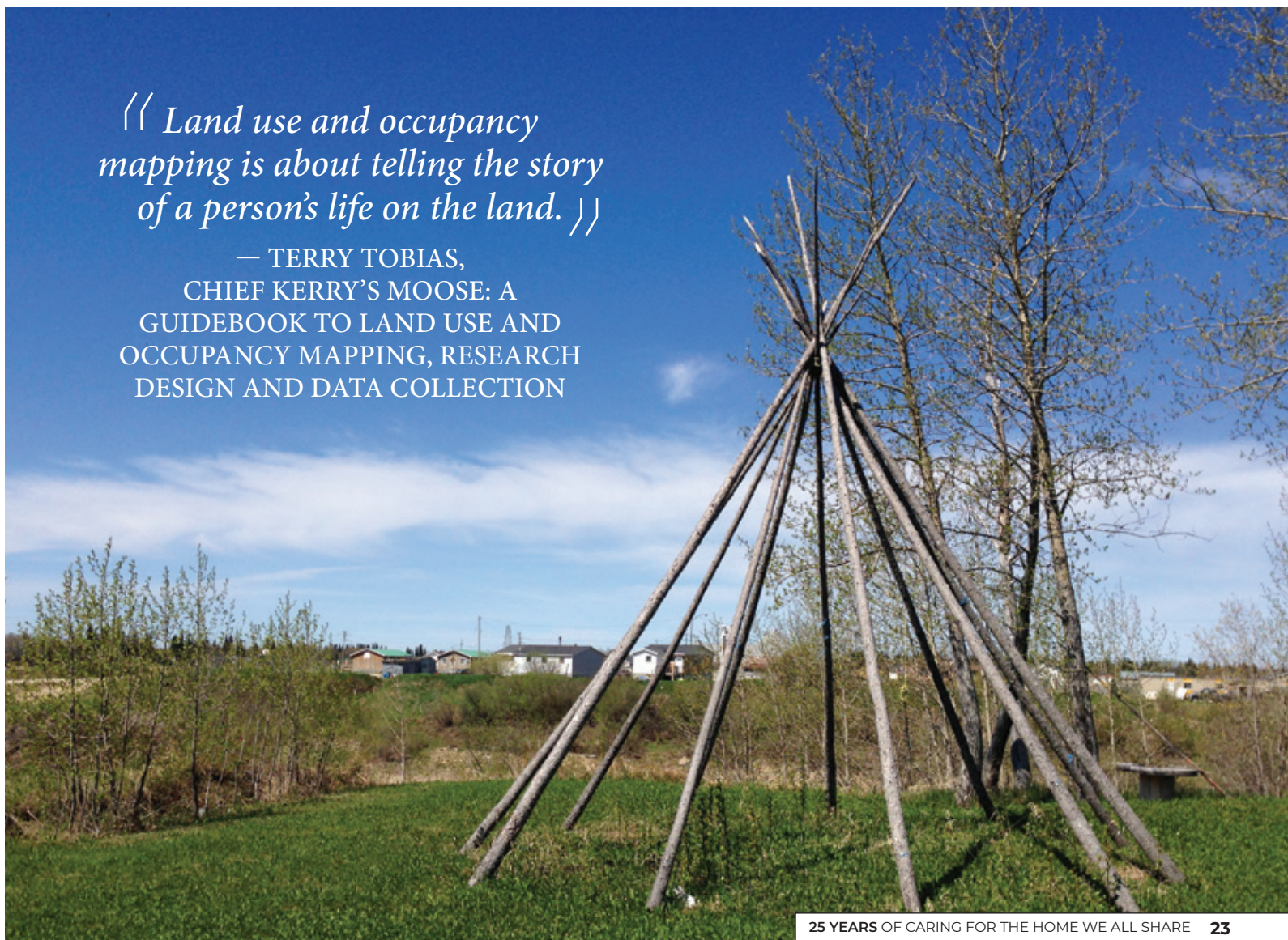
Indigenous Knowledge (IK) studies create visual stories that Indigenous communities can use to develop land use policies and practices that protect lands and waters, as well as their traditional treaty rights and interests. As part of a larger Fort Albany Comprehensive Community Planning initiative, CIER worked with

the community to find out what the members were interested in protecting to support their Land Use Planning strategy by developing an interview guide, providing training on how to conduct interviews and collect traditional land use data, and creating land use maps.

Through this project we developed an Indigenous Knowledge Template Package that includes a data collection manual, a survey template that lists questions and explains how to record them on a map, a list of materials and other templates to support Indigenous communities with IK studies.

“Land use and occupancy mapping is about telling the story of a person’s life on the land.”

— TERRY TOBIAS,
CHIEF KERRY’S MOOSE: A
GUIDEBOOK TO LAND USE AND
OCCUPANCY MAPPING, RESEARCH
DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION



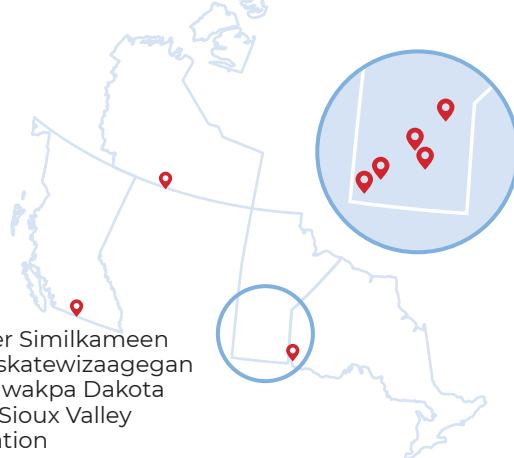
25

YOUTH LEADERS

2013-2014, 2018-2019

8 communities | 32 youth

Partners: Beausoleil First Nation, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Iskatewizaagegan #39 Independent First Nation, Canupawakpa Dakota Nation, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Lake Manitoba First Nation



Youth **are** the future. Growing Water Leaders and Seventh Generation Waste Warriors are just two initiatives through which CIER has engaged youth to be stewards of the land and effective leaders of tomorrow, by understanding the issues and opportunities, and connecting with each other to share their knowledge and build relationships.

By Shanell Mason

Seventh Generation Waste Warrior

It was a great experience that taught me self-respect and not to be shy. It taught me to love the earth in a different way. I don't just see it as earth; I see it as a place we're supposed to take care of. My time during Waste Warriors really brought me and my father closer together. I got to show him how open-minded I could be, and his final year on earth was memorable because of it. I know he loved the idea of the program. Thank you, CIER.

THANK YOU

We gratefully acknowledge the in-kind support by all our community partners, who go above and beyond to work with CIER on exploring and implementing initiatives to solve the world's wicked problems. We thank our donors, whether through ongoing or one-time donations, that have helped us collaborate to support, protect and care, contributing to CIER's 25 years of success. To our funders, thank you for your trust in what we do, your generous support and ongoing commitment, enabling us to continue directly working with Indigenous communities to make a lasting impact on the home we all share. The following are the generous funders who have supported CIER.

4D Natural Resources Consulting
Aamjiwnaang First Nation
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Agriculture & Agri-Foods Canada
Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan
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Beausoleil First Nation
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Blue Planet Links Foundation
Brock University
Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation
Canada Council of the Arts
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Canadian Boreal Initiative
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network
Canadian Freshwater Alliance
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Canupawakpa Dakota Nation
Climate Change Connection
Columbia Basin Trust
Commission for Environmental Cooperation
Community Association of South Indian Lake
Community Spirit Fund - South Beach Casino
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Earth Rangers
Ekati Diamond Mine
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First Nation Technical Services Advisory Group
First Nations University of Canada
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Keeseekoowenin Ojibway
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Lake Ontario Waterkeepers
Lake Winnipeg Foundation
Leaf Solutions
Little Red River Cree Nation
Lush Foundation
Makeway
Maliseet Nation
Conservation Council
Manitoba Association
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Manitoba Floodway and
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Manitoba Hydro
Manitoba Printmakers'
Association
Metis Settlements
General Council
Mikisew Cree First Nation
Mountain Equipment Co-op
National Aboriginal Lands
Managers Association
National Orphaned/
Abandoned Mines Initiative:
NOAMI
National Research Council
Canada
Natural Resources Canada
Nature Manitoba
Nature United
New Brunswick Wildlife
Trust
NIB Trust Fund
Norway House Cree Nation
Nuclear Waste Management
Organization
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Okwaho Equal Source

Onion Lake Cree Nation
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Opaskwayak Cree Nation
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Pic River First Nation
Pimachiowin Aki
Poplar River First Nation
Privy Council Office
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QUEST Canada
Rainforest Alliance:
Smartwood Program
Real Estate Foundation
of BC
Royal Bank of Canada
Scout Environmental
Seven Generations
Education Institute
Shell Canada
Simon Fraser University
Simpco First Nation
Sitka Foundation
Stoney Nakoda Nation
Sustainability Network
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Wikwemikong Development
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