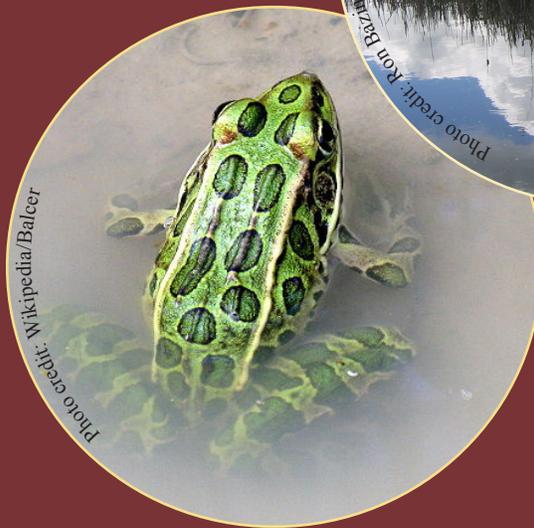




# Species at Risk Action Booklet



For First Nations in  
Southwestern Manitoba



# Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources

The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) is undertaking the role of Species at Risk Pathfinder in the Manitoba Region in order to :

- 1) Increase awareness amongst First Nations of species at risk and the Species at Risk Act (SARA); and,
- 2) Help First Nations build their capacity to take action to protect and recover species at risk on their lands and waters.

CIER is a national First Nation directed environmental non-profit organisation. We offer research, advisory, and education and training services to Indigenous communities, governments and private companies throughout four program areas: Taking Action on Climate Change, Building Sustainable Communities, Protecting Lands and Waters, and Conserving Biodiversity.

Please direct any inquiries about this document to:

Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources

3rd Floor - 245 McDermot Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0S6

Tel: (204) 956-0660

Web: [www.cier.ca](http://www.cier.ca)

Copyright and Disclaimer

© Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources Inc., 2009. All rights reserved.

CIER accepts no liability or responsibility for any damages that may be suffered or incurred by any third party as a result of the use of, reliance on, or any other decision made based upon this document.

This document has been designed for double-sided printing and was originally printed on 100% post-consumer content process chlorine free (PCF) paper.



Photo credit: Ron Bazin

# Guide to the Species at Risk Action Booklet

## Table of Contents

Guide to the Action Booklet.....Pg 2

**Species at Risk in Your Area:**

Small White Lady's-slipper.....Pg 3

Red-Headed Woodpecker.....Pg 5

Monarch Butterfly.....Pg 7

Northern Leopard Frog.....Pg 9

Bigmouth Buffalo (fish).....Pg 11

List of Additional Species at Risk.....Pg 13

Funding Options.....Pg 14

## Species at Risk in First Nations

Aboriginal peoples have a special historical and cultural relationship to plants and animals on their lands and waters. They, along with scientists and others with an interest in the natural world, have noticed that wildlife species (plants and animals) have been disappearing from lands and waters for some time.

**Species at Risk are plants and animals in danger of disappearing from the wild**

### Species at Risk Designations:

**Extinct** - No longer exists in the wild

**Extirpated** - No longer exists in the wild in Canada or in a certain area

**Endangered** - Facing immediate extinction or extirpation

**Threatened** - Will become endangered if threats continue

**Special Concern** - Sensitive to threats

## Action Booklet Purpose

Learning about what species at risk are in your area is the first step to caring for these plants and animals. This booklet provides information about what species at risk are potentially in your First Nation territory.

You can use this Action Booklet to find out:

- About species at risk and their habitat;
- Their *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*<sup>1</sup> designation;
- Why these species are at risk; and,
- How you can get your community involved in protection and recovery of these species at risk.

## Area of Focus - First Nations in southwestern Manitoba

First Nations in southwestern Manitoba were selected as a focus for this Action Booklet because a relatively large number of species at risk occur in southwestern Manitoba, potentially within First Nation territories.

It is our hope that this Action Booklet can assist your First Nation to undertake stewardship initiatives and incorporate information about species at risk into future land-use planning.



Photo credit: T. Ruta Fuchs

<sup>1</sup> The *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* is a Canadian federal law. The *SARA* aims to prevent plants and animals from becoming extinct, to help in their recovery, and to protect their habitat. The *SARA* applies to all federal lands including First Nations Reserves. Please see CIER's 'Species at Risk Information Package' for further information.

# Small White Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*)

## Have You Seen Me?



Photo credit: Manitoba Conservation

**SARA status: Endangered**

## What Do I Look Like?, Where Do I Live? and What Do I Do?

- I am an orchid that grows in clumps. Each of my stems displays a single white (sometimes tinged with pink) pouched-shaped “slipper” that is surrounded by 2 leaves.
- You can find me living in southwestern Manitoba, north of Brandon, with other small populations scattered across southern Manitoba.
- I grow in open tall grass prairies, especially on south facing slopes, but I have also been found along roadside ditches.

## Small White Lady's-slipper Life Cycle:

**May-June:** Flowering (not until having reached maturity after about 12 years of growth)

**July:** Seeds are shed

## Why are Small White Lady's at Risk?

- Habitat has diminished into fragmented areas due to an increase in agriculture and urbanization.
- Small White Lady's-slipper is very slow growing. Competition from other invasive (and faster growing) species such as St. John's Wort and Leafy Spurge is a threat.
- Digging up orchids for home gardens is a threat, since these orchids need very specific habitat, and rarely survive transplanting to other locations.



Photo credit: McGill University-Biology Dept.

# Name in Your Language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Actions

- Maintaining existing habitat and allowing for some undisturbed habitat as part of our land use plans can help plant species at risk grow and reproduce.
- It is important to avoid the temptation to transplant wild plants such as Small White Lady's-slippers into our home gardens, as they have a better chance for survival in their natural habitat.

## First Nations in Action:

A First Nation in southeastern Manitoba undertook plant surveys to find out if and where rare plant species occurred on their lands. By learning about these plants and mapping them on the landscape, the First Nation can then use the survey information to plan for future land use, taking into consideration important habitat for plant species at risk.



Photo credit: CIER/T. Ruta Fuchs

## First Peoples' Connection - Legend of the Lady's-slipper

One day, a Chief's young daughter was playing far away from her camp when she met a rabbit. The rabbit was upset because it had hurt its feet and was unable to get home. The little girl didn't like to see the rabbit crying and gave it her moccasins to wear for its journey home. As it was getting late, the little girl decided to return to her camp. She was not long on her way back before her own feet were sore and bleeding. She fell down by the path exhausted and soon fell asleep. A songbird who flew by noticed the young girl's feet and asked the Great Spirit to help her. When the little girl awoke, she found a beautiful pair of moccasins hanging from a nearby plant. She gratefully put the moccasins on her sore feet and was able to make her way home. Today, you can still see the streaks of pink or red on a lady's-slipper flower, left from the little girl's bleeding feet.

*From 'A Lady's-slipper Legend', *Cypripedium spp - Lady's slipper webpage*, Wild Rose College of Natural Healing website ([www.wrc.net](http://www.wrc.net)), accessed August 2009; with permission from Wild Rose College of Natural Healing.*

## What Can You Do?

1. Learn more about the Small White Lady's-slipper and their habitat by contacting the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre.  
Phone: (204) 945-7775.
2. Become a member of the Manitoba Naturalists Society, they are active in saving the Small White Lady's-slipper and many other efforts. Phone: (204) 943-9029 or e-mail: [mns1@mts.net](mailto:mns1@mts.net).
3. Visit the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve to observe Small White Lady's-slipper habitat. If you have similar habitat on your First Nation's territory, start a community or school project to survey your lands for this rare plant.

# Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)

## Have You Seen Me?



Photo credit: Jason H. Husband

**SARA status: Threatened**

## What Do I Look Like?, Where Do I Live? and What Do I Do?

- I am easily distinguished from other woodpeckers by my bright red head and neck.
- My habitat is open woodland (e.g. oak, poplar, maple). Other places where I live include farmland (including treed cattle pastures), and areas recovering from a forest fire. I make my nest in dead or dying trees. In Manitoba, I can be seen from the Souris River system, to Dauphin, and Whitemouth.
- I fly low to catch flying insects. My other foods of choice are fruits, nuts, and other bird's eggs.

## Red-headed Woodpecker Life Cycle:

**Mid-May:** Arrival - Spring migration

**May-June:** Mating

**June-July:** Baby birds in the nest

**August-September:** Fall migration

## Why are Red-headed Woodpeckers at Risk?

- Human disturbance - removal of their nesting habitat of dead trees (e.g. for firewood or other purposes and clearing mature woodlands for agriculture or other development).
- Road traffic collisions, because these birds fly low to catch insects.
- Competition with other birds (e.g. European starlings) for nesting sites.

## Red-headed Woodpecker Habitat (standing dead trees - may still have green leaves)



Photo credit: CIER/T. Ruta Fuchs

# Name in Your Language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Actions

- Where dead or dying trees pose no danger to humans, they should be left as habitat for Red-headed Woodpeckers and other species.
- Since Red-headed Woodpeckers feed on insects on the ground, open areas within woodlands are important habitat. Cattle-grazing that promotes open areas (keeps down the growth of thick vegetation without over-grazing) within woodlands often produces desirable habitat for Red-headed Woodpeckers (R. Bazin, personal communication 2008).

## First Nations in Action:

Several First Nations in Manitoba have surveyed for suitable habitat for Red-headed Woodpeckers on their lands. One Interlake First Nation has been monitoring Red-headed Woodpeckers on their lands for the past several years. This bird survey work has involved the community, including leadership, Elders, and youth in learning about species at risk and has started discussions on ways to protect their habitat.



Photo credit: CIER/T. Ruta Fuchs

## First Peoples' Connection - The First Flute

In Native North American culture, birds are important bearers of gifts to humans (Caduto and Bruchac 1991). The Lakota (Sioux) people of the Plains have a story of how the first flute was made. The story tells of how the red-headed woodpecker led a young man to create the first flute from a branch with holes made by the woodpecker. The man was then able to play a song on the flute to the woman that he loved.

To read the story 'The First Flute', see:  
Caduto, M.J. and Bruchac, J. 1991. *Keepers of the Animals*.  
Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, Alberta. Pg 135 of 266.



Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## What Can You Do?

1. Find out more about Red-headed Woodpeckers and their habitat by contacting the Canadian Wildlife Service (Ron Bazin at 204-984-0863 or ron.bazin@ec.gc.ca), Manitoba Conservation Data Centre (Jim Duncan at (204) 945-7465 or jduncan@gov.mb.ca), or Bird Studies Canada (Christian Artuso at (204) 945-6816 or cartuso@birdscanada.org).
2. If you have Red-headed Woodpeckers or their habitat on your First Nation lands, start a community project to survey for these birds.
3. Including species at risk habitat information into your First Nation's land-use plan is an important step to protecting and recovering species at risk.

# Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

## Have You Seen Me?



Photo credit: T. Ruta Fuchs

**SARA status: Special Concern**

## What Do I Look Like?, Where Do I Live? and What Do I Do?

- As an adult, I am a butterfly with orange wings with black veins and white spots. In my juvenile stage, as a caterpillar, I am striped bright yellow, black and white.
- I depend on milkweed (*Asclepius*) plants as a place to lay my eggs and as a source of food for the caterpillars when they hatch. I also depend on the nectar from milkweed and other wildflowers to feed on as an adult.
- I migrate south for the winter months to the southern U.S. or Mexico. During migration, I can travel up to 250 miles per day!

## Monarch Life Cycle:

**March-May: Migration and mating**

**June-July: Mating ends**

**August-October: Migration south**

**November-February: Roosting**

## Why are Monarchs at Risk?

- Loss of habitat due to human disturbance of feeding (e.g. wildflower meadows) or over-wintering areas (e.g. forests in Mexico and the United States).
- Herbicide use that kills the milkweed plants that Monarchs depend on.
- Severe weather events (increasing due to climate change).

## Monarch Habitat

(milkweed and other wildflowers, in meadows or roadsides)



Photo credit: CIER/T. Ruta Fuchs

# Name in Your Language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Actions

- Preserving existing habitat where milkweed plants grow, and creating new habitat by planting milkweed and other wildflowers can help to recover Monarch populations.
- Since Monarchs migrate, cooperation between communities in the United States and Mexico and here in Canada are key to recovery. For example, students from Little Black River First Nation in Manitoba communicated with students from Mexico to talk about their experiences with Monarch butterflies and to share ideas for recovery (Manitoba Model Forest, 1999).

## First Nations in Action:

Two First Nation teachers attended the Western Canadian Monarch Teacher's Network Workshop in July, 2009. The teachers learned a lot about Monarch butterflies. They also learned how to incorporate Monarchs into teaching about species at risk and undertaking conservation activities in their communities.



Photo credit: Lincoln Loggers

## First Peoples' Connection - How the Butterflies Came to Be

Butterflies are a special part of many Native North American cultures. 'How the Butterflies Came to Be' is a story from the Papago people in the Southwest of North America. It tells of how beautiful butterflies were created to bring joy to children and those who have experienced sorrow.

*To read the story 'How the Butterflies Came to Be', see:  
Caduto, M.J. and Bruchac, J. 1991. Keepers of the Animals.  
Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, Alberta. Pg 83 of 266.*



Photo credit: Merrell-Ann Phare

## What Can You Do?

1. Join the Monarch Teacher Network and learn more about Monarchs ([www.monarchteachernetwork-westerncanada.com](http://www.monarchteachernetwork-westerncanada.com)).
2. Hold a fun public event (include prizes and food) and plant a butterfly garden (include milkweeds).
3. Protect existing habitat. Find out where milkweed grows in your community and put up signs indicating important butterfly habitat.
4. Start a Monarch monitoring program at your school or community.

# Northern Leopard Frog (Wtrn Boreal/Prairie) (*Lithobates pipiens*)

## Have You Seen Me?



Photo credit: McGill University Biology Dept.

**SARA status: Special Concern**

## What Do I Look Like?, Where Do I Live? and What Do I Do?

- I am a frog that is recognizable by the striking dark spots against my brown-green skin colour.
- My species of frog used to be abundant, but by 1976 Northern Leopard Frogs no longer existed in Manitoba. Now, we are making a comeback in the province.
- For overwintering, I require water bodies that do not freeze over. For breeding, I prefer ponds that have vegetation, but no fish. I eat insects, spiders, small birds, snakes, fish, earthworms, snails, and slugs.

## Northern Leopard Frog Life Cycle:

**Late April:** Calling to attract mates

**May-June:** Breeding

**August:** Tadpoles become frogs

**Fall and Winter:** Hibernation

## Why are Northern Leopard Frogs at Risk?

- Drainage of wetland habitat for agriculture or other development.
- Invasive species such as the Common Carp (fish) and Purple Loosestrife (plant) can take over the frog's habitat and make it unsuitable.
- Collection of Northern Leopard Frogs for sale can deplete populations.

## Northern Leopard Frog Habitat (deep ponds surrounded by vegetation)



Photo credit: T. Ruta Fuchs

# Name in Your Language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Actions

- Destroying or modifying the Northern Leopard Frog's habitat can eliminate a local population. Our protection of these wetland habitats is needed to sustain populations.
- The Northern Leopard Frog has a diverse food source, so reducing pollutants such as commercial insecticides or pesticides can help to keep frog populations healthy.

## First Nations in Action:

Several First Nations in Manitoba with wetlands in their First Nation territory, have been learning about the importance of wetland habitat for species at risk. Through workshops and events, these communities have come together to learn more about species at risk in wetland habitats and are currently working towards their protection and recovery.



Photo credit: Balcer

## First Peoples' Connection - The Woman Who Married a Frog

The story of 'The Woman Who Married a Frog' is from the Tlingit people of the Pacific Northwest. It tells of a proud young woman who insulted the appearance of frogs. She was taught a lesson by marrying a handsome young man who turned out to be a frog. In the end, her family and community gained respect for the 'Frog people'. This story highlights the importance of respect and appreciation for all creatures.

To read the story 'The Woman Who Married a Frog', see:  
*Caduto, M.J. and Bruchac, J. 1991. Keepers of the Animals.  
Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, Alberta. Pg 107 of 266.*



Photo credit: Canadian Museum of Nature / Allan G. Austin

## What Can You Do?

1. Join FrogWatch-Manitoba ([www.naturewatch.ca](http://www.naturewatch.ca)) to learn more about frogs in your area and record information that will help conserve these creatures and their habitat.
2. Protect habitat for this species at risk by not using chemicals near wetlands. Hold a community clean-up day to learn about species at risk and remove garbage that could cause pollution of important wetland habitat.

# Bigmouth Buffalo (ON,MB,SK) (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*)

## Have You Seen Me?



Picture credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Photo credit: K. Schmidt

**SARA status: Special Concern**  
(Note: status is up for review)

## What Do I Look Like?, Where Do I Live? and What Do I Do?

- I am a large fish that can grow up to 25 kg. My scales are dull brown or olive, lighter on the underside.
- I live at the bottom of shallow lakes, ponds and pools of large streams or rivers that have a slow current. I like to be where the water is warm and murky.
- I am a type of fish called a sucker (bottom-feeding fish). I have a large whisker-free mouth that I use to eat minnows, insects, and plankton.

## Bigmouth Buffalo Life Cycle:

**April-June (when spring floods occur): Spawning**  
**Summer and Winter: Feeding**

## Why are Bigmouth Buffalo at Risk?

- The greater the spring flood, the greater habitat for Bigmouth Buffalo to spawn. Since the reproduction of this fish is tied so closely to flooding, flood control by humans is the main threat to this species.
- Temperature changes in water may harm this species.
- Parasite infections may also limit the number of Bigmouth Buffalo present in certain areas.

## Bigmouth Buffalo Habitat

(Spawning areas include shallow bays during spring floods)



Photo credit: CIER

# Name in Your Language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Actions

- Flood control is often necessary, however, working to limit the amount of impact of flood control on natural systems is important to maintain habitat for fish species at risk.
- Pollution is often a significant threat to fish species at risk. Implementing agricultural best management practices (e.g. excluding livestock from water courses) and making improvements to wastewater treatment plants can improve water quality for all species.

## First Nations in Action:

A First Nation in southwestern Manitoba is currently working with CIER to assess the health of their waterways by taking samples of animals (e.g. insects and shellfish) that live in the water. Such information can be used by First Nations to develop conservation and recovery plans that would promote the health of the plants, animals (including species at risk), and people who depend on these waterways.



Photo credit: CIER

## First Peoples' Connection - Bigmouth Buffalo in the Qu'appelle River

A First Nation Elder remembers how, in the past, people would get together at a special time in early spring when the riverbed filled up. Everyone would wait until evening and then make bon-fires on the banks of the Qu'appelle River. The light of the fires would attract the Bigmouth Buffalo fish, making it easier to catch the fish so that the people could have a feast. The Elder recalls that Bigmouth Buffalo were more plentiful in the past and were caught both in the spring and during winter ice-fishing along with jackfish, pickerel, catfish and perch as an important source of food. Flood control in the area may be one reason there are less Bigmouth Buffalo today (Piapot First Nation, pers. comm. 2006).

## What Can You Do?

1. Contact the The Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg to learn more about fish species at risk (Phone: 204-983-5000 or E-mail: info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca). The Freshwater Institute houses several programs of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and is a national centre of expertise in aquatic biology and freshwater and marine fisheries.
2. Find out what species are living in your First Nation territory waters and how you can protect them by conducting a 'bio-inventory' (collection, counting, and naming) of species.
3. We can all take part in preserving aquatic habitats. Hold a community shoreline clean-up event that can help restore habitat for species at risk and promote pride in our rivers and lakes.

# Additional Species at Risk

In selecting the species to focus on for this Action Booklet, our aim was to select: a) species at risk that were most likely to be in your area and b) representative species at risk and habitats that exist in southwestern Manitoba. The following is a list of additional species at risk that may occur in your area. Many of the following species are known to occur in specific locations. However, they may occur in areas not previously recorded, such as on First Nation lands. Therefore, it is important to be aware of these species and their habitats.

To learn more about species at risk in your area go to:

[www.sararegistry.ca](http://www.sararegistry.ca)



**Western Spiderwort**  
(*Tradescantia occidentalis*)  
SARA status: Threatened  
Habitat: sandhills



**Prairie Skink**  
(*Eumeces septentrionalis*)  
SARA status: Endangered  
Habitat: mixed-grass prairie and sandhills

Photo: Pam Rutherford's Lab - Brandon University



**Yellow Rail**  
(*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)  
SARA status: Special Concern  
Habitat: wet meadows



**Ferruginous Hawk**  
(*Buteo regalis*)  
SARA status: Special Concern  
Habitat: open prairie with scattered trees/shrubs

Photo: Dr. Gordon Court



**Sprague's Pipit**  
(*Anthus spragueii*)  
SARA status: Threatened  
Habitat: native grasslands

Photo: Rick & Nora Bowers - VIREO



**Loggerhead Shrike (Prairie Population)**  
(*Lanius ludovicianus*)  
SARA status: Threatened  
Habitat: grasslands with shrubs

Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Dave Menke



**Golden-winged warbler**  
(*Vermivora chrysoptera*)  
SARA status: Threatened  
Habitat: shrubs and mature forest

Photo: U.S. N.P.S.



**Chimney Swift**  
(*Chaetura pelagica*)  
SARA status: Threatened  
Habitat: chimneys or hollow trees, near water

Photo: Michael J. Hopiak/CLO



**Silver Chub (minnow)**  
(*Macrhybopsis storeriana*)  
SARA status: Special Concern  
Habitat: Large rivers

Photo: Konrad Schmidt

# Funding Options

Funding opportunities are available to assist involvement of your First Nation community in species at risk recovery and protection activities (such as those suggested in the “What Can You Do?” sections of this Action Booklet.).

The following is a list of possible funders. For more information about species at risk in your area and potential funding for species at risk projects, you can:

- 1) Go to [www.sararegistry.ca](http://www.sararegistry.ca) and click on the link ‘Learn about funding’; and,
- 2) See the ‘Get Involved’ Fact Sheet in CIER’s ‘Species at Risk Information Package’.

## Funds (Federal):

### Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk (AFSAR)

Contact Environment Canada at 1-780-951-8672

### EcoAction Community Funding Program

Contact EcoAction office at [ecoaction@ec.gc.ca](mailto:ecoaction@ec.gc.ca)

### Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP)

Contact Canadian Wildlife Service 1-204-984-0863

### Interdepartmental Recovery Fund (IRF)

(requires partnership with a federal organisation)  
Contact [www.irf-fir.gc.ca](http://www.irf-fir.gc.ca)

## Funds (Manitoba Provincial):

### Sustainable Development Innovations Fund (SDIF)

Contact Manitoba Conservation, Pollution Prevention Branch at 1-204-945-3554 or e-mail [pollupreve@gov.mb.ca](mailto:pollupreve@gov.mb.ca)

## Species at Risk Pathfinder

Contact the Species at Risk Pathfinder at CIER for assistance in getting your community involved in protecting/recovering species at risk, or with any questions about the information found in this Action Booklet.

Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)

1-204-956-0660 or [www.cier.ca](http://www.cier.ca)



Photo credit: T. Ruta Fuchs

## Action Booklet References

(Applies to ‘Have You Seen Me?’ and ‘Why Are...At Risk?’ sections of the Action Booklet, other references are found associated with text on the Action Booklet pages)

Environment Canada, [www.sararegistry.ca](http://www.sararegistry.ca)

Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba’s Species at Risk Fact Sheets

Manitoba Naturalists Society, *The Birds of Manitoba*, Winnipeg MB (2003)

*The views expressed herein are solely those of the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER).*

*This Project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Department of the Environment.*



If you have any questions or comments about this Action Booklet, please contact:

Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)  
3rd Floor - 245 McDermot Ave  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0S6  
Tel: (204) 956-0660  
Web: [www.cier.ca](http://www.cier.ca)

