

1995-2022

27 YEARS OF TWO-EYED SEEING

PIVOTAL MOMENT 01

ENVIRONMENTAL & EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM (EETP)

How CIER's first-ever program shaped our vision for caring for the earth we all share

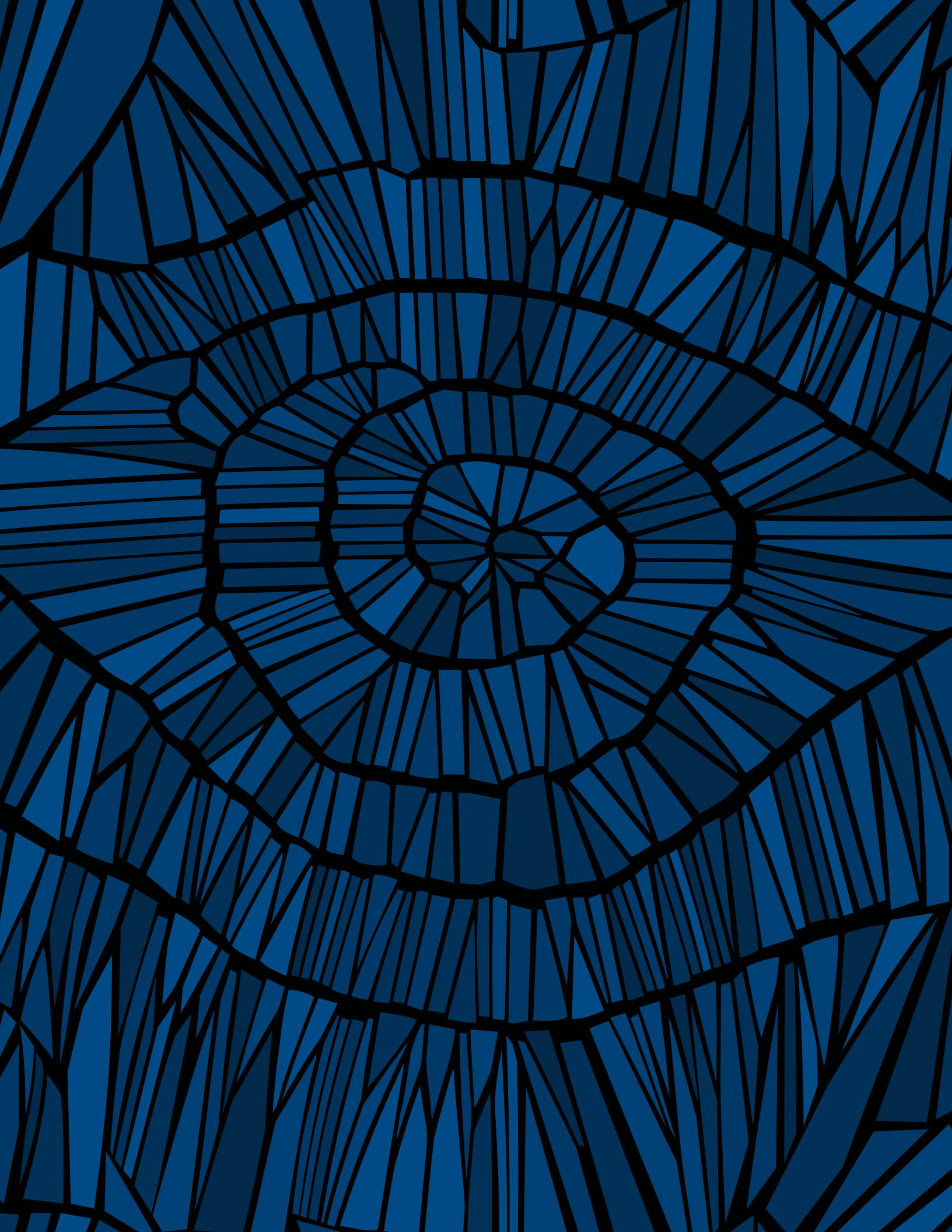
FEATURING

EETP GRADS

On learning to see the strengths of Indigenous Knowledge with one eye and Western Science from the other



CIER
Centre for Indigenous
Environmental Resources



“THE PROGRAM
WAS AHEAD
OF ITS TIME
AND RELEVANT
TODAY.”

EETP grads on their
experience and why
the world needs more
two-eyed seeing—now.

— EETP GRADS

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Special thanks to Marla Robson for
providing photos seen throughout
this magazine.



CIER

Centre for Indigenous
Environmental Resources



Phil Fontaine (former) Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

27 YEARS AGO

IT WAS THE EARLY 90s

Environment Canada and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) approach Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Phil Fontaine about their plans to help solve waste management on reserves and deal with the harmonization of environmental laws.

Grand Chief Fontaine bring together Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation Chief Manny Jules, AFN Regional Chief Roger Augustine, and Merrell-Ann Phare to discuss the need for an independent charitable, First Nation organisation focused on building capacity so that First Nations can solve their own environmental challenges.

Merrell-Ann Phare approaches Laurie Montour, a Mohawk environmental scientist and long-term environmental advocate. They write the first proposal for the creation of CIER. Support is received from DIAND and from there, a strategic initiative was developed and supported by Lloyd Axworthy (at the time, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada).

1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 200

They, along with Chief Strater Crowfoot (Siksika Nation), Chief Bernie Meneen (Little Red River Cree Nation), Chief Terry Lavallee (Cowessess First Nation) Chief Joe Guy Wood (St. Theresa Point First Nation) and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come (Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)), work together as the founding board to create CIER and secure funding from the federal government for its first initiative - EETP.

CIER spearheads an education program focused on Indigenous communities tackling environmental issues that they face.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM (EETP)

Post-secondary accredited environmental studies | 18 months | 15 courses
Studies in environmental impact assessment, monitoring and auditing
Each course was taught by 3 instructors, 2 of which were Indigenous | 49 First Nation graduates
Partner: University of Manitoba

Few post-secondary environmental education programs in Canada are designed specifically to meet the needs of Indigenous people. CIER's Environmental Education and Training Program (EETP) was the country's first.

EETP responded to the vision of Elders and community leaders—for Indigenous youth to become environmental decision-makers who would build on traditional values of respect and care for interacting with the Creator.

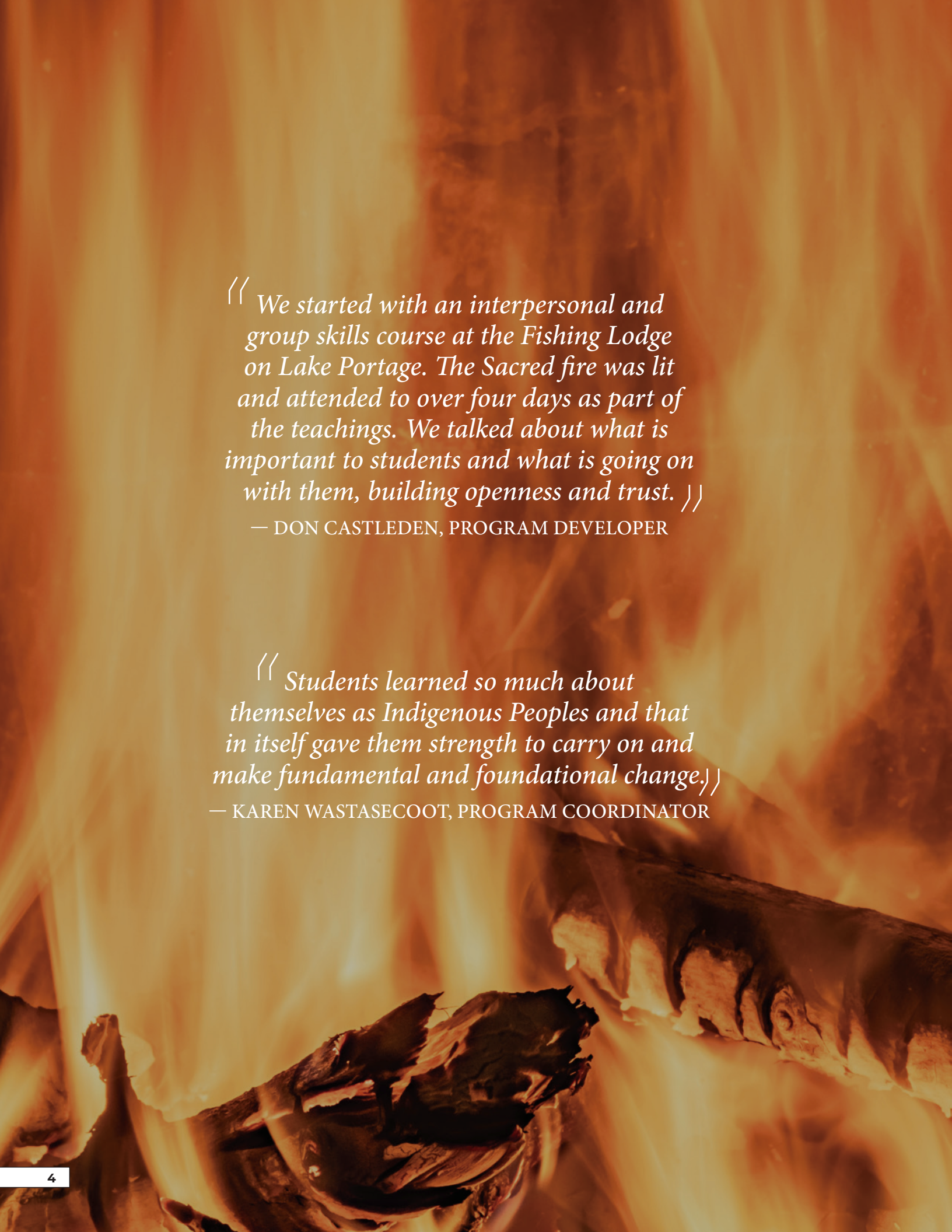
Through EETP, First Nation students from across Canada learned to resolve environmental problems facing First Nation communities through an approach rooted in the experience and history of Indigenous people. Elders designed the program, which united disciplines, cultures, and generations, and presented a collaboration of Indigenous and Western knowledge.

Elders knew that communities' environmental challenges were rooted in their historical relationship with the Western world.

Students learned there is a wide range of possibilities for the collaboration of Indigenous and Western knowledge.

Students learned from teams of three instructors, of which two were Indigenous. One instructor on each team was an Indigenous Elder, whose Indigenous Knowledge was vital to instructors' and students' success. As people who are intimate with the land, Elders know that communities' environmental challenges were rooted in their historical relationship with colonialism's multigenerational legacies.

Students also learned from case study presenters and field trips. Field trips, in particular, grounded their learning. During trips, students experienced the knowledge, history, and culture of a community, and recognized this as an important step in community-based approaches to environmental protection.



“ We started with an interpersonal and group skills course at the Fishing Lodge on Lake Portage. The Sacred fire was lit and attended to over four days as part of the teachings. We talked about what is important to students and what is going on with them, building openness and trust. ”

— DON CASTLEDEN, PROGRAM DEVELOPER

“ Students learned so much about themselves as Indigenous Peoples and that in itself gave them strength to carry on and make fundamental and foundational change.”

— KAREN WASTASECOOT, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

IN CONVERSATION

CIER co-founders Roger Augustine and Merrell-Ann Phare

look back at how and why EETP came to life.

Roger: I can't believe it's been 27 years since the first EETP cohort. It feels like just yesterday we were talking about the need for Indigenous people to be in a position to make positive environmental change.

Because our lives are tied to the land, Indigenous people have always felt the immediate impact of forest fires, polluted waters... yet, as Chief, I experienced that we were routinely excluded from making decisions that affect our future.

Merrell-Ann: And the vision for EETP was born...

Roger: We needed to fill the gap through education and create one paid First Nation permanent position in each community focused on addressing their environmental issues. It was as simple as that.

Merrell-Ann: The vision for an environmental sciences program for Indigenous students that combined Indigenous ways of knowing with Western science was quite idealistic back then.

Roger: Yes, but when the group of us, all Chiefs at the time, were talking about how to address environmental

problems faced by our communities, we knew the significance of grounding initiatives in these two knowledge systems because environmental problems are complex and don't follow political, cultural or legal boundaries.

Merrell-Ann: EETP was the project that cemented CIER's approach to our work—to build capacity that meets the needs of Indigenous communities. It was a proud moment.

Roger: It is quite moving to hear grads' stories and see how the program has helped create Indigenous leaders who are protecting the environment.

Merrell-Ann: They've made incredible contributions across the country. For 27 years, they've been showing that Indigenous Knowledge and Western science can work together to create a sustainable earth.

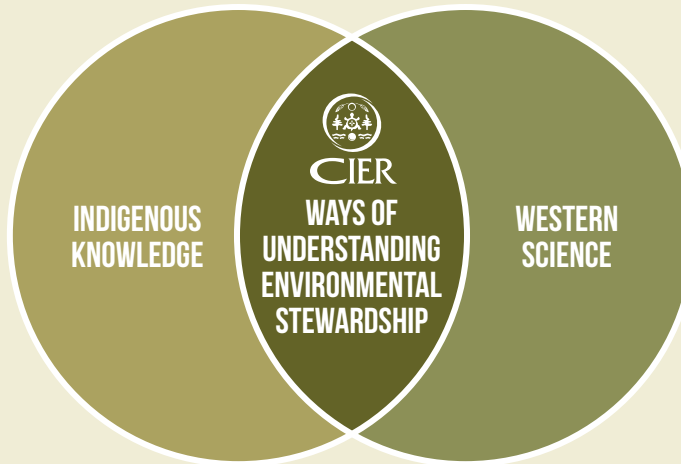
Roger: I'm honoured to be a part of it.

Merrell-Ann: As am I. It's great to share their stories and celebrate with the funders, donors, partners, students and communities who have, for years, worked alongside CIER to make change. We have accomplished so much together.





Observations, cultural practices, values/ethics, identity and histories acquired and passed on through generations of being out on the land practising traditional activities and ceremonies.



A process that uses scientific observations and methods to develop and test hypotheses, make inferences or draw conclusions that can then be used to inform resource management decisions.

The collaboration of Indigenous and Western knowledge in environmental education was EETP's most unique feature. Concepts, ideas, approaches, and techniques of two worlds converged in both classroom and field activities, and in the minds and hearts of students.

ETUAPTMUMK

(TWO-EYED SEEING)

Through two-eyed seeing, students learned to see strengths of Indigenous Knowledge with one eye and strengths of Western science from the other eye. They used both eyes together for the benefit of all living things.

“ Many years ago, I brought forward the guiding principle of *Etuaptmumk* or *Two-Eyed Seeing* for co-learning. It encourages the realization that beneficial outcomes are much more likely in any given situation when we are willing to bring two or more perspectives into play. As such, *Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing* can be understood as the gift of multiple perspectives, which is treasured by the *Mi'kmaw* people and probably most Indigenous peoples. Our world today has many arenas where this principle, this gift, is exceedingly relevant including, especially, education, health, and the environment. ”

— MI'KMAW ELDER ALBERT MARSHALL



VELMA ORVIS

A TRIBUTE

Velma Orvis (Ojibway/Cree) was one of the first Elders to be involved with CIER. As a teacher, she was a key support as a knowledge keeper for the students throughout the Environmental and Education Training Program. Known widely for her community work and unconditional love for others, she was involved with groups such as End Homelessness Winnipeg, Ka Ni Kanichihk, Grandmothers Protecting our Children and shared cultural teachings at the Stoney Mountain Institution. She was also involved in the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. 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, and we believe that her work will continue through the many lives she has touched with her kindness and teachings.

DR. GORDON ROBINSON

A TRIBUTE

Dr. Gordon Robinson co-created the curriculum of CIER's Environmental and Education Training Program and had a long and distinguished career in research and teaching, including acting as Associate Dean of the Faculty of Science of the University of Manitoba from 1997 to 2005. In that role he was a lead proponent of the program within the University, and was instrumental in securing degree credits for the EETP into the faculty of arts and the faculty of science. He brought his passion for the environment and sustainability to his classrooms, for which he was recognized with several excellence-in-teaching awards. In his later years, he promoted access to, and success in, math and science education in primary and secondary schools, inspiring generations of young scientists. He will be remembered for his generosity, kindness, and infectious enthusiasm for the natural world. After his passing, his children donated a number of Indigenous art prints to CIER, which are now on display in one of our project offices.





Misty Potts is an EETP graduate from the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and has been described as a “shining light” and a true inspiration to others. As a Stoney Matriarch and PhD candidate, Misty forged a new path with her Masters research on the Chronic Wasting Disease in Moose Populations in her community’s traditional lands.

As part of her thesis, Misty interviewed Elders and community members, many who were still practicing their traditional economies of hunting, fishing, and trapping. She also went onto the land and documented these changes and did so in a way that incorporated both her traditions as well as the expectations around Western science. Her work was described as innovative, grounded in both cultures and very sharp and insightful, and continues to inspire those who are following her path. Misty is one of the many missing Indigenous women in Canada and has not been seen since March of 2015. CIER, her fellow graduates and her family remain hopeful that she will be found.

MISTY POTTS

A TRIBUTE



VIEWPOINTS

Photo (left to right): Eddie Amagonalok, Robin Billy, and Lianna Anderson

The program's first course focused on interpersonal and group skills—a critical experience in building an effective group.

BRUCE ELIJAH, ELDER

The ten years I spent in the program was a one-of-a-kind experience that I think about often. One of the things I remember most is how we used to camp with the students at this bird sanctuary on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. The staff and I would spend time with each student by the sacred fire. This was one of those special times in the program where I felt I really started to get to know the students. It wasn't just us giving teachings, each student had their own story to share, and I learned a lot from their stories and family traditions. We were witnessing young people going through their journey to become future leaders. I would love to visit each student today and hear about their lives.

STEWART HILL, INDIGENOUS SCHOLAR

I have been thinking about the convergence of Indigenous Knowledge and Western science since my time at the EETP program. Western science and Indigenous Knowledge have a very different fundamental formula so you cannot combine them, it is like apples and oranges, but when you cut them up and mix them together, they make a great fruit salad and they are both fruit: a high source of fibre and a good source of vitamin C. In essence we look for similarities and commonalities with the settler people that are part of Canada. The point is that we as First Nations people are in a time where we are asserting our rights to self-determination and self-governance. I would like to see EETP brought back for our young leaders of today. We need a program that can allow people from different backgrounds into a shared sacred space to talk and learn, to continue building capacity in the environmental field as the government transfers over program delivery to First Nations and as we strive for self-determination. An equally important point is that the laws of Canada need to change to accommodate our traditional knowledge and how we govern ourselves. We need to co-exist in a spirit of respect and recognition of each other's cultures.

JILL OAKES, NON-INDIGENOUS PROFESSOR

It was extremely insightful to work together in a classroom setting totally submersed in Indigenous world views – an amazingly rich experience. It was an honour to be involved with a group of committed students that created a dynamic classroom environment. It was also very exciting to be involved in a program that was based on a 'nation to nation' type agreement between Phil Fontaine and the President of the University of Manitoba. It would be powerful to see this program run again, but this time with all the new and up and coming Indigenous scholars who now have PhDs.



DON CASTLEDEN, PROGRAM DEVELOPER

How the program began

We wanted to create a national environmental impact assessment program based on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and experience. We also wanted the program to be given degree credit by the University of Manitoba. In 1995, the idea was well ahead of its time in terms of the creativity that went into designing its program and courses. We created teams of instructors for each course including an Elder, an Indigenous instructor knowledgeable in the appropriate discipline, and an academic whose credentials were acceptable to the University. What we faced was illustrated by the response of one Associate Dean when I first explained the program to him, pointing out that each course must include IK. He responded by stating that the University had no way of validating this knowledge. I agreed but pointed out that was why we were including an Elder on each instructional team. They were the only ones who could validate the IK included in each course.

Connecting CIER and University of Manitoba

The next step was to advise CIER's Executive Director, Merrell-Ann Phare, that she and the Chair of CIER's Board, Manitoba Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, should meet with the University President to get his support. This occurred and a memo from the President was distributed shortly after indicating that the President was fully behind the program and wanted the full support of all the Deans. Indigenous academics from various disciplines and universities were recruited from across the country to serve on an Academic Advisory Council. The Dean of Science, the Associate Dean of Arts and the Dean of Continuing Education represented the University on the Council. The Director of Environmental Studies at the University also fully supported the program and faculty in that the Department successfully proposed that the Senate grant nine unallocated degree credits for the program. The two-year program was eventually granted two years of degree

credit in the University's four year Environmental Studies Program for students maintaining acceptable marks in their studies.

If I were to do it again

In hindsight, if I worked on the CIER program again, I would schedule more time to prepare the courses and work with the instructors to create instructional teams, documenting the process as we went along, revising each course and the overall program. I would also have liked to have published a paper on the work and to have established the program as a leading educational experience, recognized by the University as an innovative learning opportunity.

Life today

After taking early retirement from the University, Jaye, my late wife (who helped Merrell-Ann put together the first budget), and I moved to Vancouver Island where I connected with the Comox Valley Project Watershed Society.. I eventually became Chair of the Board and led the initiative to create a partnership between the K'omoks First Nation, the City of Courtenay and Project Watershed. The partners have raised over six million dollars to purchase a former sawmill site in the K'omoks Estuary and are now in the midst of restoring the site as natural habitat, excavating a stream and pond, creating a salt marsh island and planting natural vegetation – eel grass, shrubs, salt marsh and sitka spruce.

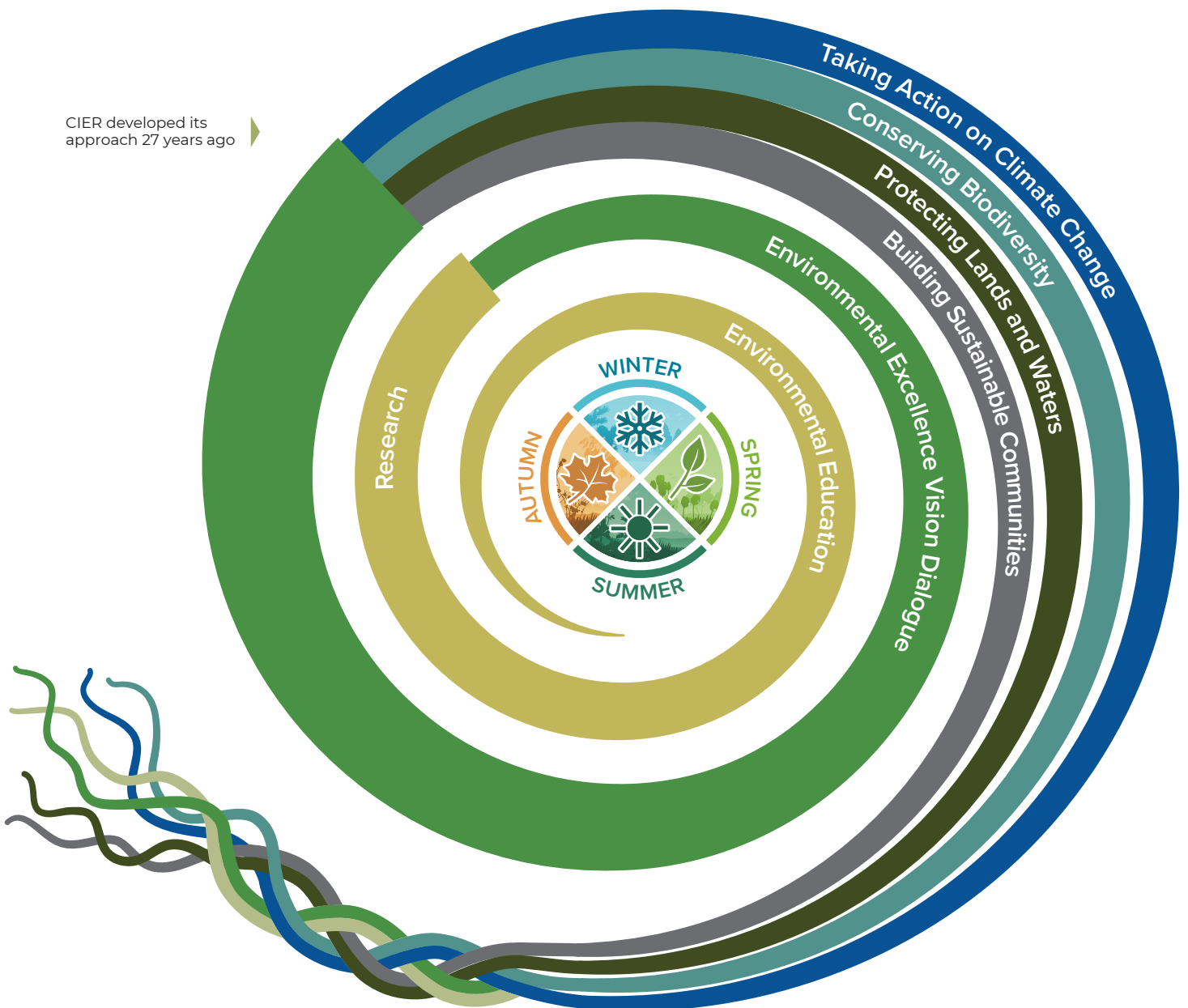
A final note

CIER's EETP won the Award of Excellence from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education in 1998. The Award is given each year for a certificate, diploma or degree program created by a Continuing Education Division (and partner or partners) in a Canadian university.

BRAIDED KNOWING SYSTEMS

CIER was created to support Indigenous people and communities to be leaders in positive environmental change using the best of Indigenous and Western knowledge to create a world that is in balance and supports the well-being of all living things. The Environmental Education and Training Program was the first CIER initiative that set the foundation for bringing these different knowledge systems together to take action on climate change, conserve biodiversity, protect lands and waters, and build sustainable communities. CIER's approach -27 years later- still stands today.

CIER developed its approach 27 years ago ▶



PIVOTAL MOMENT 01

Twenty-seven years after graduating, EETP grads share stories of how they came to be part of the first program of its kind in Canada, where it led them, and what it means to engage in a lifelong pursuit to protect the earth we all share.



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FORESTS, BUT NOW I
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CECILIA BAKER

THERE SHOULD BE HARMONY IN EDUCATION

I had no idea that education could be so harmonious. This program took a holistic approach to learning about the environment; combining Western science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into daily learning.

The friendships I made during the program changed my life. I loved connecting with others and learning more about the connection of Mother Earth and our peoples' well-being. Our people face the trauma and blood memory of the events of all the assimilating policies. There is a cry and need to instill Traditional Knowledge, language, and a TEK worldview. It is important to address and incorporate these issues to resurge in our language, identity, and TEK.

EETP helped shape my future. It was a stepping-stone to get my Bachelor of Environmental Studies at the University of Manitoba, which still supports my work with communities. I have a dream to make TEK, language, the history of First Nations, and all their impacts part of early education and for newcomers, and to have this knowledge be incorporated into all areas of government and policy, such as environment, justice, education and Indigenous affairs.

“There is a cry and need to instill Traditional Knowledge.”

— CECILIA BAKER, GRAD '01



'01 classmates gather for a group photo



THOMAS BEAUDRY

WHY THE WORLD NEEDS AN EETP REBOOT

I'm not sure where I would be now without the EETP program, it had such a large impact on my life. I learned so much, including writing policy, applying Indigenous Knowledge to Western science, and how to be an influencer of change.

These skills have helped me to keep being a voice in government, reminding them that they should be engaging and developing plans with Indigenous peoples and communities, instead of simply issuing permits and licenses to industry.

All of the awesome people who were involved with the program who shared their knowledge show that if we can learn and teach together, we can accomplish more when protecting the waters and land.

I believe it is important to develop programs like EETP in the future because it will assist Indigenous communities in developing their own laws and policies regarding land and water management. We as Indigenous people would benefit from approaching resource development as equal partners with governments and industry and having final decision-making authority to any development on ancestral lands and waters. This will ensure that we have the lands and waters protected for the future seven generations.



GRAD '97

LAREN BILL

WHY WE NEED FIRST NATIONS EDUCATED IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

My Dad was a park warden, so I grew up living close to Wood Buffalo National Park and Prince Albert National Park. Having grown up with wonderful experiences of living near these two parks, my initial career goal was to be a park warden too. However, after completing the CIER Education Program (EETP), followed by an undergraduate degree and Master's degree, my goal shifted. I wanted to work in the area of lands focused on Indigenous land rights. What drew me to EETP was that it included both First Nations and Western scientific perspectives about the environment, and this education did not exist elsewhere.

EETP was ahead of its time when it was created and is incredibly relevant today. As First Nations, we are experiencing the impacts of climate change, increased pressures on water and land, ongoing impacts of

colonialism, and continued infringements on our rights as Indigenous Peoples. Given these realities, we need First Nations educated in this field of study, equipped with tools to participate in efforts to address these issues. We also need our Aboriginal and treaty rights upheld and protected. For the past 14 years, my role has been to ensure that unfulfilled Treaty Land Entitlement legal obligations in Manitoba are addressed.

EETP was a positive, life-changing experience that I am grateful for. Through it I connected with and learned from Indigenous leaders and Elders who themselves were committed to environmental protection. They generously shared their knowledge with Indigenous students from across the country, and through this experience, connected us all to a nationwide network of like-minded Indigenous advocates for land and water.



GRAD '01

GORDON BLUESKY

HOW I BECAME A LEADER

EETP was the first post-secondary program I ever completed. I just continued to build on that accomplishment that CIER proved to me—that I could accomplish goals. The people involved like Velma Orvis and many others, including students, gave me the confidence to walk forward and be a leader in my field.

Being a sixties scoop survivor, EETP was one of my first introductions to cultural knowledge and practices. The main things I learned in the program are the core in all I do: collaboration, leadership, and the integration of Traditional Environmental Knowledge (often called Traditional Knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge).

CIER was an essential step in my life and it really defined who I am today. I've been a Lands Manager and Director for the majority of my career with a main focus on First Nation governance systems. I feel we must practise what we preach locally in our communities before looking externally. We need to be working with communities and developing environmentally-focused governance systems and practices.

This course changed my life as it was. I'd love to see it continue with same vision, so it can continue changing lives. Collaboration, leadership and integrating Traditional Knowledge are all keys to a brighter future.

Charles and classmates connect through a game of beach volleyball



GRAD '99

CHARLES GAUTHIER

PASSING DOWN MY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

When I participated in EETP, I had already been through largely Western academia university and college, but the EETP program was, by far, the best formal education experience I had, and one of the best life experiences.

I quickly came to appreciate the level of knowledge among the Elders and other instructors, as well as my friends and peers.

I often look back fondly on the experiences I received in the program. I was shown the importance of being patient with innocent ignorance. I now see ignorance as

an opportunity for creating awareness. I don't look at it as pride in my own knowledge, but rather satisfaction that I could pass on something that was passed on to me.

I was originally drawn to the program because of the combination of Indigenous Knowledge and environmental science that was used to support environmental and community goals. We need to use this same approach to tackle current issues and build capacity in communities while reclaiming governance and control over lands.

I hope to be given the chance to pass down my experience to the next generation of EETP participants.

GRAD '01

KATHLEEN GRAHAM

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY WOKE

Even after 20 years, CIER holds a special place in my heart. When I reflect back on my time there, I'm always struck by how happy and cared-for I felt, even thousands of kilometers away from my home. Surrounded by a unique range of environmentally-woke students from across the country, I found my people and they became family.

My career dreams have changed and evolved over the last 20 years. When I left EETP, I believed that all development was bad, however the only jobs I could find were within the mining sector because they were the only companies hiring environmental professionals. Since graduation, I have gained insights into all of the systems at play in our society (environmental, economic, social and political).

I've learned that there has to be balance between protecting the environment and responsible development and job creation. I know I could never give up my vehicle or my smartphone, but I want to know that the mineral components of our technologies were developed in an environmentally responsible manner.

If CIER were to re-imagine EETP, I would like to see it include teachings on the traditional economies of North America and how our 'woke' generation can work toward strengthening First Nation economies. It would be amazing to focus teachings on the many ways First Nation people have adapted to current economic opportunities to generate wealth in ways that are significant to their Nations. It would be incredible to see a program that teaches students how to work toward economic sustainability and independence of their nations, so that all our relations can stand tall and proud.



GRAD '97

MELISSA HOTAIN

MY MESSAGE TO INDIGENOUS YOUTH

I believe that everything happens for a reason, and finding the EETP ad in the newspaper was an important part of my lifelong journey. CIER helped me move from my work in finance to environmental positions and helped me create networks to further my career.

I also learned to be observant and to be an active listener. I was fortunate to travel and learn about other cultures, like the James Bay Cree, learning how hydro development impacted their lands and way of life.

I learned that Indigenous science and worldview is equally important as Western science, if not more important.

Twenty years later we are still facing many environmental issues in our communities and across Canada. I want to see the next generation learn to channel their passion toward water and the land. We need more First Nation youth going into the sciences and other lands management programs to tackle ongoing environmental issues from coast to coast. To achieve that, we need to encourage outreach, training, and career opportunities at the First Nation level.

I want the world to be a place where my grandchildren and future generations will never have to worry about access to clean water and healthy lands.

GRAD '97

JAYMIE LEARY-BALFOUR

A LASTING IMPACT

I had always known that I wanted to go into the environmental field and was already attending university with plans for Environmental Sciences. EETP assisted me in defining my morals and values more clearly. I suspect that without the program I would have gone in to a more traditionally defined career as opposed to working in lands and environment and human rights/treaty rights.

As I reflect now, the most profound experience for me is the friendships made and growth that we have been able to witness in each other from our days in school, back in 1995, to now. I also learned about extreme diversity within our people. That experience has assisted me in my efforts to understand others' experiences.

I am not sure that I have made an impact on the environment but I do believe that I have made an impact on others: on youth that I have worked with, on people that I have met and shared my perspectives with through professional settings. I feel pride



when I am able to share the realities and needs of our communities with others in a way that creates inspiration followed by real change.

My hope is that I will leave a lasting impact on the people around me and that my legacy will be family and friends and those that knew me speaking of me in high regard and with admiration that I always gave my best effort to protect my people, my family, and my territory with humility and passion.



GORDON PICTOU

GRAD '99

LEARNING THAT SOME THINGS WERE NOT MY FAULT

I was lost without much direction before EETP. I had a negative self-perception, unresolved anger, addictions, and a spiritual void that ached. Bruce Elijah, Alejandro Rojas, and Arlo Looking Horse all made monumental impacts on the person I developed into, as did being part of such a tight knit group of friends in the program.

Arlo took me on a spiritual journey that began my reconnection to a spiritual path. Bruce helped me to heal my relationship with my residential school survivor of a father before he passed, and he also helped me understand that a lot of things that happened to me were not my fault. Without meeting Alejandro I wouldn't have realized I loved teaching. He gave me the confidence to pursue teaching as a career.

During my time in EETP, I was taught invaluable lessons like two-eyed seeing, which is learning to see problems and solutions from Western scientific and Mi'kmaw perspectives. I was given the confidence to bring communities together to work across differences and centre learning opportunities in my cultural teachings and traditions. As a teacher, I do this regularly as our school is at the heart of our community. I also do it as a cultural safety trainer for healthcare and educational professionals.

Since graduating I have spent the most time towards making sure there are positive opportunities for our youth in sports and school. I am also working towards creating safer, more inclusive spaces for people to be their unique selves without persecution or penalty, and healing and ending cycles of poverty and abuse in my family.

GRAD '98

MARLA ROBSON

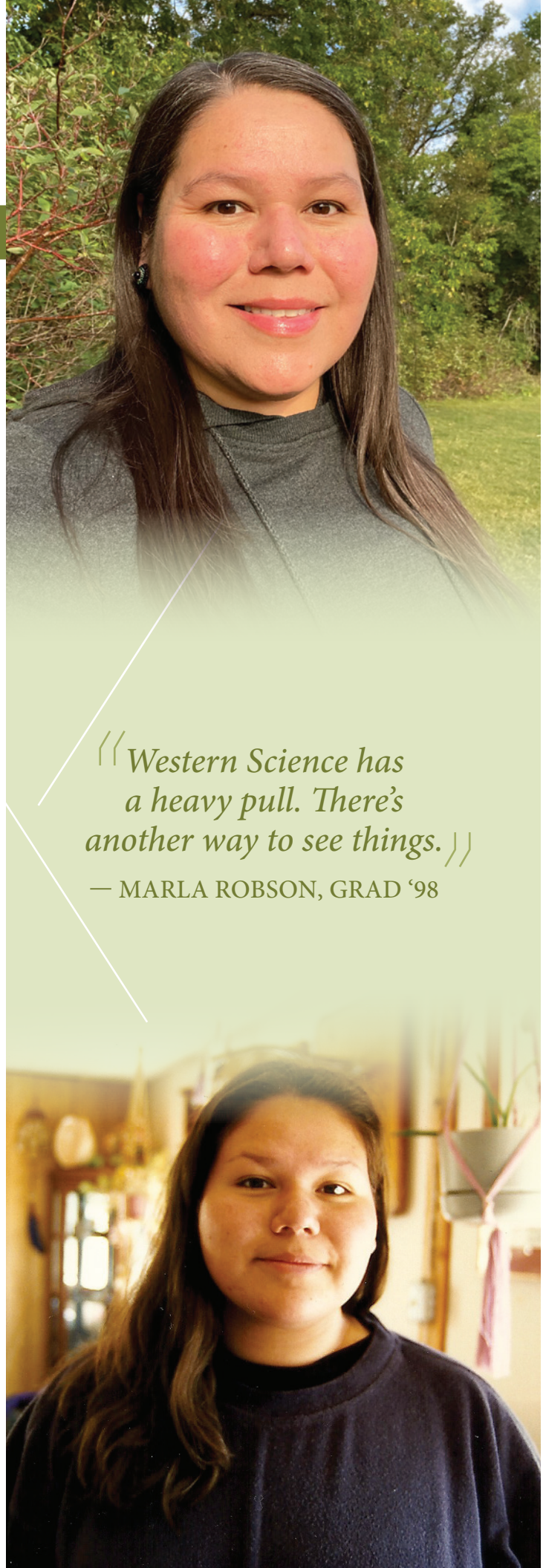
HOW LISTENING TO ELDERS CHANGED MY LIFE

Learning from a diverse team of Elders and Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars was a very unique experience. I really treasure that time because there weren't many opportunities like that out there; and that continues to be the case today.

We witnessed, in real time, how reconciling two knowledge systems can look and feel. We saw the model for it time and time again with new instructors and experts who came in from across Turtle Island. It showed us how to balance and how to focus two ways of seeing and understanding. Spending time with Elders is critically important. Our Elders are aging seemingly faster and faster and we lost quite a bit of time with them during the pandemic, too. Connecting students to Elders and the knowledge they carry in the foundational years of students' post-secondary education is important. Western Science has a heavy pull. You need that foundation to root you into something strong where you can say there's another way to operate here or to see things.

When I consider the number of Elders we had the great privilege of sitting in circle with at EETP, it's quite profound. Our group spent the most time with Elder Bruce Elijah (Oneida) but I also have fond memories of the late greats Robin Greene, Garry Raven (both Anishinaabe), and Velma Orvis (Ojibway, Cree), as well as Arvol Looking Horse (Lakota) and many others who travelled from across Turtle Island to take part and who contributed greatly to our education. These folks worked and studied a long time, and by sharing with us, they connected and grounded us to that knowledge and those efforts. It leaves me wondering how do I ever truly express enough gratitude to them?

Marla up early to prepare for ceremonies at the home of Robin Robert Greene Sr. and Kathleen Greene in Shoal Lake, Ontario



Western Science has a heavy pull. There's another way to see things.}}

— MARLA ROBSON, GRAD '98

GRAD '98

ARCHIE STOCKER



Students prepare for a Midewiwin ceremony and sweatlodge

I USED TO DESTROY FORESTS, BUT NOW I AM A LAND GUARDIAN

Without CIER I wouldn't have quit logging. I would have kept cutting down trees that were 12 feet thick, standing 200 feet tall. I would have continued blasting out roadways through mountains to haul out wood.

I heard about EETP from one of the alumni who was on Haida Gwaii visiting for Christmas. While here, she looked up the best candidate for the next CIER session and received my brother's name. I happened to be baby-sitting when she called and told her "No! My brother cannot go because he is just finishing off his house, paying for a truck and raising two little kids, but I can go!"

I had no idea that the course was going to be life changing when I signed up. I had just returned home from an

extended 'walk about' through the lower mainland of BC and EETP was just an excuse to get me out of town again. I figured that I would ride it for a month or two until I found a good job, but then CIER took the cake and kept me interested enough to stay till the end. For me to sit down, enjoy, n' "conform" to a schooling education for 18 months shows how well the CIER program was set up.

I think the main thing that kept me interested in the schooling was learning from a mix of Indigenous and Western scholars and Elders. The Elders especially had such a full n' wholesome way of viewing and describing different situations. I believe this course is a MUST; a must for more native students. There should be more programs, one for the East coast, West coast and maybe in the North.

Archie sits lakeside, upon return from plant surveys





“The integration of Western and Traditional knowledge systems is essential for addressing complex challenges and fostering a more holistic understanding of the world.”

— JOHN THOMPSON, GRAD '01

GRAD '01

JOHN THOMPSON

STRENGTH IN COLLABORATION

EETP was life altering! It's something I'll never forget and helped shape my worldview. I was surrounded by mentors and classmates who became an extended family. I learned so much from the diverse perspectives. The friendships gained still remain, serving as a testament to the deep connections formed during our journey. We learned about both Indigenous and Western worldviews, where I discovered that one was not better than the other; instead, they complemented each other, weaving a tapestry of knowledge that was richer and more nuanced than either could achieve alone. It became clear to me that the integration of Western and Traditional knowledge systems is not just beneficial but essential for addressing complex challenges and fostering a more holistic understanding of the world. I will always be grateful to the EETP and all the amazing opportunities it provided, and I truly hope to see this program be available again for future generations. Ekosi.



John Thompson (left) and classmate Leo Bruno make an Inukshuk together

GRAD '98

BARRY WILSON

LEARNING TO PROTECT THE LAND

EETP was truly a unique experience. I found it interesting to learn how Traditional Environmental Knowledge usually came up with the same results as Western Science. It also proved that it can save a ton of time during an environmental assessment process.

EETP gave me the skills to be able to do public speaking, research, and to understand the importance of this type of work. I liked learning from Elders, especially Bruce Elijah. I loved all the Elders I was fortunate to learn from, but the connection was really strong with Bruce. Working with Elders helped me see the strength in our people. It busted stereotypes that we all hear about our people and gave me the skills to go back to my home community of Fisher River Cree Nation and became one of the community's Council members. I was able to serve my community for a total of 10 years in that capacity and one of the things I was able to do was get the support to identify the Fisher Bay Provincial Park as a protected area by the Province of Manitoba.

I wish this program had continued as people trained in this field could really assist our communities. A lot of communities are looking at taking over Land Management in their territories, and having our people trained in this field could help ensure that proper systems are put in place to ensure their lands are protected for future generations.

Aaron Pervais (carrying Saige Taylor), Clarina Taylor and Barry Wilson hike in the Experimental Lakes Area, Ontario



Elder Bruce Elijah teaching Interpersonal communications and group dynamics in the CIER classroom in the Johnson Terminal, Winnipeg, Manitoba



Ken Schroeder and Barry Wilson enjoy a downtime visit to the outflow, Delta Marsh, Manitoba

THE SACRED BUNDLE

During the CIER EETP, students and Elders contributed sacred items – medicines and eagle feathers - to create a bundle to support the program, students, and honour all who were involved throughout its duration. Laren Bill has been the Keeper of this sacred bundle for 27 years. Initially, he carried it and kept it safe on behalf of the students and Elders, while also sharing its gifts during program pipe ceremonies and feasts. Since the end of the EETP, Laren has continued to share the bundle and stories with CIER staff several times throughout each year to support staff in their work and lives.

CIER: 25 YEARS



A look at 25 CIER projects, with highlights from guest writers—visionaries, leaders, knowledge keepers, supporters, thinkers and doers—who have shaped CIER's movement to protect the earth we all share.

LIST OF STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS AND ELDERS

We would like to acknowledge all the students, instructors and Elders who participated in the Environmental and Education Training Program, a program that shaped our vision for caring for the earth we all share. We thank the students who were willing to share their stories and apologize to any who we were unable to connect with.

Aaron McLean	Cyril Keeper	Jill Oakes	Nick Prince
Aaron Pervais	Dale Ahenakew	Jim Tobacco	Norma Kassi
Al Hunter	Daniel Andre	Joe Keeper	Patt Larcombe
Alejandro Rojas	Danny MacDonald	John Augonia	Patricia Houlihan
Alex Denny	Darren Thomas	John Sinclair	Patricia Manuel
Allan Benoit	Dave Huebert	John Thompson	Patricia Sellers
Allan Henderson	Dave Young	Jules Lavallee	Paul Bourgeois
Allan Wolfleg	David DesBrisay	Karen Peterson	Paul Mandel
Amanda McLean	Dawn Martin-Hill	Karen Wastasecoot	Paulette Fox
Andrea Michael	Deborah McGregor	Kathleen Graham	Peter Borotosik
Andrew Chapeskie	Dene Cultural Institute	Kathleen Greene	Peter Coonishish Coon
Andrew Day	Don Castleden	Keith Lewis	Peter Homenuck
Angus MacIntyre	Donald Sam	Ken Schroeder	Ramona Bird-Billy
Anne Wilson	Doug & Alana Kitchেকেসিক	Kim Courchene	Ramona Samatte
Anokiiwin Training	Duane Good Striker	Kirk McKay	Randy Kapashesit
Archie Stocker	Ed Azure	Krista Derrickson	Raphael Fobister
Barbara Frazer	Ed Vystricil	Laara Fitznor	Ray Schmidt
Barbara Lavallee	Eddie Amagonalok	Lana Eshquib	Rick Lightning
Barney Masazumi	Eddie Benton	Laren Bill	Rebecca Ratt
Barry Smith	Edmund Metatawabin	Laurie Montour	Robin Billy
Barry Wilson	Elinor Keter	Leanne Simpson	Robin Greene
Bernardo Reyes	Elizabeth Lightning	Lee Francoeur	Ron Hall
Bertha Blondin	Eric Funk	Lee Sanderson	Scott General
Betsy Troutt	Evelyn Jack	Lena Spence	Sonny Flett
Boyd Mancheese	Fred Major	Leo Bruno	Stephane McLaughlin
Brenda Apetagon	Gary Abigosis	Leticia Racine	Stephanie Trudeau
Brian Nootchtai	George Blondin	Lianna Anderson	Steve Sands
Bruce Elijah	Gilbert Knott	Linda Hope	Stewart Greene
Buster Welch	Gloria Cranmer-Webster	Lindsay Gulenchyn	Stewart Hill
Candice Arrow	Gord BlueSky	Lloyd C. Flett	Susan Wilkins
Cecil Paul	Gordon Kern	Manny Metallic	Sylvia Henry
Cecilia Busch	Gordon Pictou	Margaret Eriksson	Terri-Lynn Williams
Charles Bigelow	Greg Prieston	Margaret Lavallee	Thomas Beaudry
Charles Gauthier	Harold Daniels	Marla Robson	Tobasonakwut Kinew
Cheryl Bird (Edwards)	Herb George	Maureen Ballantyne	Tom Green
Chief Arvol Looking Horse	Ian Bruised Head	Melissa Hotain	Tom Weegar
Chris Flett	Ian Davidson-Hunt	Miranda Gould	Tony Mercredi
Christine Cleghorn	Ian Davies	Misty Potts	Trish Sellers
Clarina Taylor	Irene A. Griffin	Moneca Sinclair	Valerie Wood
Clement Mason	Jason Cook	Murdena Marshall	Velma Orvis
Crystal Farlow	Jaymie Leary-Balfour	Nancy Morgan	Vernon Altman
Cynthia McPherson	Jean Labrador	Nichollette Prince	Winston Paul



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for all living things.

