



Circle for Aboriginal Relations – CFAR - summary

Prior to the turn of the twenty first century the Alberta Government did little to protect Indigenous Communities ties to the land from Land resource development impacts. Land resource developers like: oil & gas, oil sands, forestry, mining, electric power producers and Government of Alberta Road developers are the most active developers on the land in Alberta. Rural Alberta Indigenous communities have been overrun by these impacts on their reserves and crown land. Indigenous communities in Alberta had little to no environmental capacity to protect their traditional ties to the land, never alone participate in land resource management or development.

Prior to the creation of the Circle for Aboriginal Relations (CFAR) Society, Industry Indigenous Relations Professionals would attend and participate in the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers meetings (CAPP) in the 1990s. I attended these meetings representing an oil & gas company that I worked for at the time. However, the agendas were always to the benefit of the land resource developers. My fellow CAPP Indigenous Relations Professionals and myself could see that Industry relations and Indigenous communities needed a safer neutral place to better understand Indigenous Community expectations, concerning ties to the land and treaty rights.

Circle for Aboriginal Relations was created by a small group of Oil & Gas and Pipeline Industry Indigenous Relations Professionals. At the turn of the twenty first century a few Indigenous Relations Professions from Trans Canada Pipelines and British Petroleum approached their companies for the purpose of creating a nonprofit group called **Circle for Aboriginal Relations**. The purpose was to include and gather Indigenous Relations professionals from Industry, Government and Indigenous Community that needed a safe neutral environment to better understand Indigenous Community Relations expectations and awareness concerning land resource development.

I want to recognize and call attention to the following Indigenous Relations efforts of Art Cunningham (Trans Canada Pipelines), Lane Wells and Jude Daniels from BP Petroleum. Their companies funded the startup of CFAR. Creating a safe neutral environment would also encourage Indigenous Relations Professionals to

gather, socialize and talk about Indigenous Relations Professional business matters. This would be a major accomplishment for Industry Indigenous Relations awareness. They in turn could advise their leadership on business awareness, concerns and matters.

Right from the beginning CFAR focused on developing Indigenous Relations Professional credential recognition. Basically, more importance and recognition for Indigenous Relations Professionals. One way of drawing more attention to the Indigenous Relations Professional role was to create a professional designation. CFAR's Indigenous Relations Professionals accreditation – ICIR program - was championed by a CFAR Board Member Dr. Pat Makokis from Saddle Lake FN. Dr Makokis has ties to the UofA and the Yellowhead Tribal College. Finally providing credential recognition for the Indigenous Relations Professionals.

CFARs mission was created to provide Indigenous Relations Professional leadership and networking for Indigenous, Government and Industry relations. This would be accomplished by creating trust, respect and credibility among the membership and others. Having been involved with CFAR from the beginning. I saw the value this created for Industry, Government and Indigenous Communities concerning effective Indigenous Relations Professionals. Initially I participated in a CFAR subcommittee that created the first CFAR By-laws for the nonprofit Society. After that I joined the Board of Directors for several years until I retired in 2017 from working in Oil & Gas, GoA and MNA at 65 years of age. I was then asked by CFAR current President Sandra Sutter to participate as an elder advisor providing prayers for CFAR board meetings and events. I continue this role to present day.

I would like to thank all past CFAR Presidents, board and regular members that I have worked with over the years. It has been a blessing and an honor to participate with such knowledgeable Indigenous Relations Professionals from Community, Industry and Government. CFAR started as an interest to form a group of Indigenous Relations Professionals in the early 2000s and bloomed into a well-known and respected Non-Profit Society based in Calgary and Edmonton. I am very proud to be a member of an organization with fellow professionals that pride themselves on being the best at their trade of Indigenous Relations Professionals.

Some thoughts I would like to relay today is that over the last twenty years CFAR nailed its original objective to help Industry, Government and Indigenous communities work better together and accomplish what did not exist prior to 2000. Now that CFAR served its purpose over the last 20 years Industry, Government and Indigenous communities are working much more efficient together by understanding each other's expectations, concerning sustainable land resource management. I for one still believe that a role for CFAR still exists and maybe its time that Indigenous communities run it.

- **Bob Phillips**