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AUGUST BRINGS NEW WAYS TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

August is often the month when summer slows down just enough to savour it. Long evenings, warm days on the water, and time spent exploring local trails and natural spaces remind us why protecting our watershed matters. It's also a time when many of us begin looking ahead, planning fall projects, making the most of the growing season, and finding new ways to give back to the places we enjoy.

In this edition of Watershed Watch, we're celebrating the people, projects, and everyday actions that help keep our watershed healthy and resilient. You'll discover practical ways to make a difference at home, learn how simple stewardship initiatives can have a meaningful impact on local wildlife, meet members of our summer team who are helping advance conservation across the region, and get a preview of opportunities to continue learning and getting involved this fall. Whether you're planting native species, making your home safer for birds, or joining us to explore the future of our lakes, every action contributes to the health of the watershed we all share.

As summer begins its gradual transition toward autumn, there's still plenty of time to get outside, explore a conservation area, enjoy the lakes, rivers, and trails that make our region special, and take part in protecting them for future generations. Thank you for being part of our conservation community. We hope this month's stories inspire you to discover something new, share what you've learned, and continue making a positive difference, one small action at a time.

The Kawartha Conservation Team

Have questions about something you read in this newsletter? Want to learn more about a program, event, or conservation initiative featured in this issue? We'd love to hear from you! If you have questions, feedback, story ideas, or would like to contribute content to a future edition, please contact Carolyn Snider, Community Engagement Technician, at csnider@kawarthaconservation.com or 705-328-2271 ext. 212.

BIRD-FRIENDLY WINDOWS HELP MAKE KAWARTHA CONSERVATION SAFER FOR BIRDS

Sometimes, a simple change can make a remarkable difference.

Visitors to the Kawartha Conservation Administration Centre at Ken Reid Conservation Area may notice a new pattern on the building's front windows. These bird-friendly window markers have been installed to help reduce bird-window collisions and create a safer environment for the many bird species that visit the area.

Birds often cannot distinguish clear or reflective glass from open sky or surrounding habitat. As a result, they may accidentally fly into windows, causing injury or death. Bird-friendly window markers break up reflections and create a visible pattern that birds recognize as an obstacle, helping them avoid collisions while having minimal impact on views from inside the building.

These specially designed markers have been shown to reduce bird-window collisions by more than 95%, demonstrating how a straightforward solution can have a significant conservation impact.

"This project is a great example of how small actions can lead to meaningful conservation outcomes," said Danielle Marcoux-Hunter, Stewardship Coordinator at Kawartha Conservation. "By making our building safer for birds, we're demonstrating that everyone, from homeowners to businesses and organizations, can take practical steps to help protect the wildlife that shares our communities."

The project was made possible through the collaboration of several community partners. Kawartha Conservation extends its thanks to Bird Friendly Kawartha Lakes for helping bring the initiative forward, Feather Friendly for generously donating the window marker products, and Kawartha Bird Control for completing the installation.

The installation reflects Kawartha Conservation's ongoing commitment to protecting local wildlife and promoting practical stewardship actions that benefit the watershed. It also serves as a reminder that conservation is often built on everyday decisions that, together, create healthier and safer environments for people and nature alike.



Top Row: Neil Gray, Danielle Marcoux-Hunter, Jackson Boyes, Pat Warren
Bottom Row: John Bick, Peter Franzen, Jamie Morris, Mark Majchrowski

ABIGAIL FOLK – STUDENT PLACEMENT - ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD TECHNICIAN

Question: What program are you currently studying, or what did you study in school?

Answer: I'm currently studying psychology with minors in neuroscience and climate science at Princeton University.

Question: What are you most looking forward to during your summer at Kawartha Conservation?

Answer: This summer at Kawartha Conservation, I'm most looking forward to working in the field with the environmental technicians here and learning the ways that they monitor the health of the watershed.

Question: Why do you think conservation is important?

Answer: I feel that conservation is important because it helps maintain and promote happy and healthy communities in the present and the future.

Question: What has been your favourite part of the job?

Answer: My favourite thing I've done this summer at Kawartha Conservation was changing temp loggers in cold water streams. It was really neat to see the beautiful natural environment around these streams and the ways that Kawartha Conservation works to log temperatures and understand the changes in the populations of brook trout."

Question: If you could teach everyone one thing about the environment, what would it be?

Answer: If I could teach everyone one thing about the environment, it would be that the ocean acts as a carbon sink and that if we could develop the technology to speed up the rate of carbon sequestration into the ocean, we would be able to reverse the effects of climate change.

Question: What does stewardship mean to you?

Answer: To me, stewardship means assuming responsibility and learning about the environment and climate.

Question: What is an accomplishment from school, work, or volunteering that you're especially proud of?

Answer: This summer at Kawartha Conservation I am piloting a climate education initiative introducing weather stations into local schools to help promote climate science education across the watershed.



MIRANDA BIRKS-JEFFERY – COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIST

Question: What program are you currently studying, or what did you study in school?

Answer: I currently go to Trent University, and I am studying for my Bachelor of Business Administration.

Question: What is one thing you hope to learn or gain from this experience?

Answer: It is really hard to pick one thing I'd like to learn or gain from this experience. As someone who doesn't have an environmental background educationally, I am learning something new every day, working with a variety of our departments and interacting with all of the wonderful people at the organization. Additionally, I am looking forward to gaining more hands-on experience in a corporate communications department and putting my education into practice.

Question: Why do you think conservation is important?

Answer: I think conservation is important not only for us to continue to experience the beautiful landscapes we have today, but also to help wildlife continue to thrive, as well as the environment as a whole.

Question: What is your favourite conservation area, and why?

Answer: I would pick Windy Ridge Conservation Area. It is such a beautiful place. It's a fairly short trail, but the lookout at the top is absolutely beautiful. Getting to look over the marsh and see the natural landscape makes it such a wonderful spot.

Question: Do you have a conservation-related story or experience that inspired you?

Answer: I think one thing that inspired me to work at Kawartha Conservation is probably just my love for the outdoors and for nature. I spend a lot of time outdoors today, and growing up as well. Whether that be at home or at my local conservation areas, going there a lot with my grandparents and my siblings, they definitely hold special memories for me. I think it's important to be involved with conservation efforts so that future generations can continue to have those experiences.

Question: So far, what has been your favourite part of the job?

Answer: It's definitely hard to pick one favourite experience so far at Kawartha Conservation. Each and every day is something different, and I get to do a lot of work with the different departments we have here, including the Integrated Watershed Management team, the Conservation Area Lands team, and the Stewardship team. Getting to go out and see what these people are doing every day and contributing to conservation efforts is really amazing. So, I think every day at Kawartha Conservation is my favourite.

Question: If your life had a soundtrack, what's one song that would definitely be on it?

Answer: If my life had a soundtrack, one song that would definitely be on it would be Vienna by Billy Joel. I think it is a beautiful song and has some really impactful messaging.

Question: If you could teach everyone one thing about the environment, what would it be?

Answer: It would probably be to expect the unexpected. I'm learning new things every day about the environment, and I think the biggest takeaway from that is that we are always learning something new. You can think one thing, and Mother Nature will show us something completely different. Always be open and willing to learn, and expect that things might not always be as they seem.

Question: What is one goal you hope to accomplish while working at Kawartha Conservation?

Answer: I think that my main goal working at Kawartha Conservation is to really help with public education. Working in the Communications department, a lot of what I'm doing this summer is creating content for the public to see, and part of that is teaching the public about what we do at Kawartha Conservation and why conservation work is so important. So, if I can educate one person this summer through my videos or other forms of media, that would be awesome.



PLANT THIS FALL FOR A STRONGER SPRING

If you've been thinking about adding trees, shrubs, or native wildflowers to your property, fall is one of the best times to plant.

Kawartha Conservation's Fall Native Plant Sale returns August 10 to August 31, giving residents an opportunity to enhance their landscapes while supporting healthier forests, cleaner water, and more resilient wildlife habitat across the watershed.

Native plants have evolved alongside our local soils, climate, birds, and pollinators, making them a smart choice for almost any property. Once established, they generally require less watering and maintenance than many non-native species, while helping reduce erosion, absorb rainfall, improve soil health, and provide food and shelter for bees, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife.

Many people think of spring as the ideal planting season, but autumn offers some of the best growing conditions. Warm soil and cooler air allow plants to focus on developing strong root systems before winter, giving them a healthy head start for the following spring.

"Fall is an excellent time to establish native plants because they're able to put their energy into growing strong roots before winter arrives," says Kawartha Conservation Stewardship Technician Julia Derue. "Whether you're adding a few pollinator plants to your garden or planting trees and shrubs on a larger property, every native plant helps create healthier, more resilient landscapes throughout the watershed."

Whether you're restoring a shoreline, creating habitat for pollinators, increasing privacy, or simply looking for beautiful, low-maintenance landscaping options, the Fall Native Plant Sale makes it easy to choose species that are well suited to your property.

Because quantities are limited and popular species often sell quickly, residents are encouraged to place their orders early.

Important Dates

- Sale opens: Monday, August 10, 2026
- Sale closes: Monday, August 31, 2026
- Plant pick-up: Friday, September 11, 2026

This fall, plant something that will continue to grow for years to come while helping protect the watershed we all share.

Visit www.kawarthaconservation.com/healthygardens beginning August 10 to browse available plants and place your order.



TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO REGISTER FOR THE STATE OF THE LAKES SYMPOSIUM

Registration is filling quickly for Kawartha Conservation's inaugural State of the Lakes Symposium, taking place on Friday, September 18, 2026, at the Fenelon Falls Community Centre.

This one-day educational symposium will bring together scientists, environmental professionals, community organizations, and residents for an engaging look at the current state of our lakes and the actions being taken to protect them.

Throughout the day, attendees will hear from experts on topics ranging from aquatic vegetation, fisheries management, source water protection, and public health, to local stewardship initiatives, community well-being, and the future of lake management across the Kawartha watershed.

In addition to keynote presentations, participants will have the opportunity to meet with environmental organizations and community groups through a series of interactive information booths, providing opportunities to ask questions, learn about local initiatives, and discover ways to become involved in protecting our watershed.

"The State of the Lakes Symposium is designed to bring people together to learn, share ideas, and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing our lakes," said Carolyn Snider, Community Engagement Technician at Kawartha Conservation. "Whether you're a waterfront property owner, environmental volunteer, municipal representative, researcher, or simply someone who enjoys spending time on the water, there will be something valuable to take away from the day."

Lunch is included with registration, and the \$15 registration fee helps offset the cost of lunch and event delivery. It is not a fee to access Kawartha Conservation's watershed information or monitoring data, which continue to be publicly available through the organization.

With an outstanding lineup of speakers, opportunities to connect with local organizations, and a full day dedicated to the future of our lakes, this inaugural symposium promises to be an informative and worthwhile event.

If you've been considering attending, now is the time to reserve your spot before registration closes. Interested individuals can register at www.kawarthaconservation.com/stateofthelakes.

For more information on how Kawartha Conservation can help.
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