



July 2026/ Vol 28

## A SEASON TO EXPLORE

Summer has officially arrived, school is out, and communities across the watershed are making the most of the longer days, warmer weather, and opportunities to get outdoors.

Whether you're heading to the cottage, planning a camping trip, exploring local trails, or simply looking for ways to enjoy nature closer to home, there's no shortage of ways to connect with the outdoors this season.

In this issue of Watershed Watch, we're inviting you to discover conservation areas through the eyes of the staff who help care for them every day with a new series of guided hikes at Windy Ridge and Ken Reid Conservation Areas. You'll also meet two of our summer Conservation Area Assistants, learn about a sweet new fundraiser supporting Christmas at Ken Reid, and get an early look at our inaugural State of the Lakes Symposium coming this September.

Summer is one of the busiest and most exciting times of year across the watershed. From trail maintenance and stewardship projects to community events and outdoor education opportunities, our staff are hard at work helping people connect with, enjoy, and protect the natural spaces that make this region so special.

So grab a cold drink, find a comfortable spot in the shade, and enjoy this month's edition of Watershed Watch.

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](mailto:csnider@kawarthaconservation.com) or 705-328-2271 ext. 212.

## DISCOVER NATURE THROUGH THE EYES OF KAWARTHA CONSERVATION STAFF

Most visitors experience conservation areas through the trails they hike, the wildlife they encounter, and the landscapes they enjoy. This July, Kawartha Conservation is offering a unique opportunity to go beyond the trail signs and learn directly from the staff who help protect, maintain, and study these special places every day.

Through a series of guided hikes at Windy Ridge and Ken Reid Conservation Areas, participants will gain firsthand insight into the stories, challenges, and natural features that make these conservation areas so important to the region.

Each one-hour hike is led by Kawartha Conservation staff and offers a different perspective on the landscape, from conservation area operations and forest recovery to tree identification and stewardship.

### **Behind the Trails: Windy Ridge Stories and Conservation Areas Work**

#### **July 2 | Windy Ridge Conservation Area**

Ever wonder what happens behind the scenes to keep conservation areas safe, accessible, and enjoyable for visitors?

Join Conservation Areas Assistants Brooke Gallagher and Natalia Marzec for a guided walk through Windy Ridge Conservation Area as they share the history of the property, its unique natural features, and the day-to-day work involved in managing a conservation area. Participants will learn about trail maintenance, environmental stewardship, habitat protection, visitor services, and seasonal operations while exploring one of the watershed's most scenic conservation areas.

### **When the Forest Fell: Stories from Point Loop**

#### **July 16 | Ken Reid Conservation Area**

The 2025 Ice Storm left a lasting mark on forests throughout the watershed, including Ken Reid Conservation Area.

Join Conservation Areas Technicians Freddie Caveen and Jackson Boyes for a guided hike along Point Loop, a popular trail that was completely lost following the storm. Along the way, participants will hear firsthand accounts of the damage caused by the storm, the challenges faced during cleanup and restoration efforts, and the work required to safely reopen the trail. The hike offers a unique opportunity to witness the forest's recovery while gaining a deeper appreciation for the resilience of nature and the staff who help care for it.



## **Branching Out: Tree ID at Ken Reid**

### **July 30 | Ken Reid Conservation Area**

Have you ever walked through a forest and wished you could identify the trees around you?

Join Agricultural Stewardship Assistant Natalie Caines and Agricultural Stewardship Technician Tom Tiisler for an engaging introduction to tree identification. Participants will learn practical techniques for recognizing common tree species using leaves, bark, branching patterns, and overall tree structure. Whether you're new to tree identification or looking to sharpen your skills, this hike offers a fun and accessible way to connect with the forest.

"These hikes are about helping people see conservation areas in a different way," said Carolyn Snider, Community Engagement Technician with Kawartha Conservation. "Participants will have the opportunity to learn directly from the staff who work on the land every day, hear stories they might not otherwise know, and develop a deeper appreciation for the natural spaces we all enjoy."

Each guided hike is approximately one hour in length and costs \$10 per person plus HST.

Space is limited and advance registration is recommended. Visit the Events section of the Kawartha Conservation website to learn more and register.



## BROOKE GALLAGHER – CONSERVATION AREA ASSISTANT

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

**Answer:** I am going into my fourth year at Trent University for Conservation Biology.

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

**Answer:** I am most looking forward to feeling more capable in myself and what I can do physically. I am pretty small, but that's not going to stop me.

**Question:** Why do you think conservation is important?

**Answer:** First, I think conservation really matters for wildlife and biodiversity, but also for the people aspect, actually getting people outside and connecting to nature, which is really important.



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

**Answer:** Durham East Cross Forest was my favourite conservation area, but I'm starting to really like Ken Reid. Actually, the Chickadee Boardwalk is probably my favourite feature. I love how, with the birds, you can just hold out your hand and they will come.

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

**Answer:** When I was little, the first thing that inspired me to appreciate nature was when me and my family would go out to our local forest. We would go there in spring, summer, winter, or fall, it didn't matter. Every single time, it was beautiful and stunning. Whether sledding or walking, it was so much fun.

**Question:** If you could be any wildlife species, what would you be and why?

**Answer:** For a wildlife species, I would definitely be a tropical fish because they get to sit in the ocean all day by the coral reefs, soaking up the sun, and that seems like a dream to me.

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

**Answer:** My favourite part so far has been hiking around the different trails we have and making sure they're safe and useful for everyone to enjoy.

## NATALIA MARZEC – CONSERVATION AREA ASSISTANT

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

**Answer:** I am most excited about opening up our new conservation area, Tuck'd Away Trail.

**Question:** Why do you think conservation is important?

**Answer:** I think conservation is important because it helps maintain and protect the land, not just for us but for future generations.

**Question:** What's an interesting fact about yourself that most people may not know?

**Answer:** An interesting fact about me that most people don't know is that I like to scrapbook.

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

**Answer:** My favourite conservation area is Windy Ridge Conservation because of the lookout and the famous habitat tree. The habitat tree is very well known because it is a large tree that died, and now a bunch of porcupines moved in.

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

**Answer:** A conservation story that inspired me to work here was that when I was in high school, I worked at a nature centre, and I just knew then that I wanted to work outside.

**Question:** If you could be any wildlife species, what would you be and why?

**Answer:** If I could be any wildlife species, I would be a fox because I think they're very clever, very cute, and they get to adventure all day and sleep all day, so I think that's what I would want to do.

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

**Answer:** So far, my favourite part of the job has been getting trained on how to use all of the equipment, like the zero-turn mower, how to back up a trailer, and I was able to cut down a dead ash tree to make sure one of the trails in Pigeon was safe to walk on.



## GRAB A CANDY PAIL AND SUPPORT CHRISTMAS AT KEN REID

Looking for a fun summer treat for the kids while supporting a beloved community event?

Kawartha Conservation is excited to launch the Christmas at Ken Reid Candy Pail Fundraiser. Filled with a delicious assortment of gummies, these colourful pails are perfect for summer road trips, camping adventures, cottage weekends, family gatherings, movie nights, and more.

Prepared and filled by Burns Bulk Food in Lindsay, each candy pail is packed with a variety of gummy favourites that are sure to be enjoyed throughout the summer.

Two sizes are available:

- **Small Candy Pail** - \$8.85 plus HST
- **Large Candy Pail** - \$17.70 plus HST



While the candy pails are available now, the proceeds will help support Christmas at Ken Reid, Kawartha Conservation's free annual holiday event held each December at Ken Reid Conservation Area.

Each year, Christmas at Ken Reid welcomes families from across the watershed for a day of festive activities, holiday entertainment, outdoor fun, and opportunities to create lasting memories together. Community support helps keep this event accessible and free for everyone to enjoy.

Candy pails are available for a limited time and quantities are limited, so be sure to place your order before they're gone.

Whether you're stocking up for summer adventures, looking for a fun gift, or simply want to support a great local tradition, a Christmas at Ken Reid Candy Pail is a sweet way to make a difference.

Order your candy pail today at [www.kawarthaconservation.com](http://www.kawarthaconservation.com) and help make Christmas at Ken Reid possible for local families this holiday season.



## WHAT IS THE STATE OF OUR LAKES? JOIN THE CONVERSATION THIS SEPTEMBER

The lakes of the Kawartha watershed are more than just beautiful places to spend a summer day. They support fish and wildlife, provide drinking water, attract visitors, contribute to local economies, and help define the communities we call home.

But like lakes across Ontario, they are facing growing pressures. Invasive species, changing weather patterns, shoreline development, water quality concerns, and evolving recreational demands all influence the health of our lakes and the decisions being made to protect them.

To help foster a better understanding of these challenges and opportunities, Kawartha Conservation is hosting its inaugural State of the Lakes Symposium on Friday, September 18, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Fenelon Falls Community Centre.

The symposium will bring together scientists, environmental organizations, community leaders, lake associations, stewardship groups, and residents for a day of learning, discussion, and collaboration focused on the future of our lakes.

Attendees will hear directly from experts working on some of the most important issues affecting our region's water resources. Presentations will explore topics ranging from aquatic vegetation and fisheries management to public health monitoring, source water protection, community well-being, and programs that support local landowners in protecting and improving lake health.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Andrea Kirkwood (PhD, Environmental Microbiology) discussing Aquatic Vegetation in the Kawartha Lakes: The Good, the Bad, and the Complexity
- Adam Challice, Nolan Pearce, and Jeremy Holden from the Ministry of Natural Resources presenting on Monitoring, Assessment, and Management of Fisheries in FMZ 17
- Jim Hunt, former Chair of the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Committee, speaking about The Importance of the Source Protection Program
- Lakelands Public Health presenting on public health surveillance programs, including beach monitoring, mosquitos, ticks, and rabies awareness
- Eric Smeaton, Executive Director of the Kawartha Community Foundation, sharing findings from the community's Vital Signs Report
- Kawartha Conservation staff discussing the Lake Management Implementation Action Plan and programs that support local landowners
- Gavin Vance, Lake Stewardship Coordinator with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association, sharing finds from the Lake Partner Program Initiative

Additional speakers and panel discussions will be announced as planning continues.

"The State of the Lakes Symposium is an opportunity to bring together people who care about the future of our lakes," said Carolyn Snider, Community Engagement Technician with Kawartha Conservation. "Whether you're a waterfront property owner, member of a lake association, municipal representative, environmental professional, or simply someone who enjoys spending time on the water, there is something valuable to learn. We want people to leave with a better understanding of the issues affecting our lakes, the work being done to address them, and how they can be part of the solution."

Beyond the presentations, attendees will have opportunities to connect with organizations working across the watershed through vendor and information booths. Participating organizations currently include the Kawartha Conservation Foundation, Kawartha Land Trust, The Land Between and Turtle Guardians, Invasive Species Awareness Program, Scugog Lake Stewards, Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association, Lakelands Public Health, Forests Canada, and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA).

Registration is just \$15 per person and includes lunch.

Whether you are interested in lake stewardship, environmental science, fisheries, public health, community engagement, or simply gaining a deeper understanding of the lakes that shape our region, the State of the Lakes Symposium promises to be an informative and engaging day.

Space is limited. To learn more or register, visit the State of the Lakes Symposium [event page](#) on the Kawartha Conservation website.



*For more information on how Kawartha Conservation can help.*  
Conservation Lands: [conservationareas@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:conservationareas@kawarthaconservation.com)  
General info: [geninfo@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:geninfo@kawarthaconservation.com)  
Permitting: [permits@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:permits@kawarthaconservation.com)  
Planning: [planning@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:planning@kawarthaconservation.com)