



SPRING IS HERE, LET'S GET GROWING

April brings a noticeable shift across the watershed. What felt tentative in March begins to settle into something more certain - longer, warmer days, the return of birdsong in the morning, and the first signs of green pushing up through the landscape. The season is no longer just approaching, it is arriving.

In this issue of Watershed Watch, that sense of arrival is reflected in the opportunities to take action. The launch of our 2026 Spring Native Plant Sale invites residents to make a direct impact at home, supporting pollinators, improving habitat, and contributing to a healthier watershed, one garden at a time. For farmers and landowners, the upcoming ALUS webinar offers a chance to explore practical, supported approaches to stewardship that strengthen both working lands and the environment.

This is also a time to reconnect with community and the outdoors. Spring Fling returns in May, bringing people together to celebrate the season in a way that is simple, welcoming, and rooted in the natural spaces that define this region. At the same time, April encourages us to think beyond the present moment. Through legacy giving, there is an opportunity to consider the long-term future of the places we care about most, and how today's decisions can help ensure those landscapes remain protected for generations to come.

April is a turning point. It is where intention becomes action, where ideas begin to take root, and where our connection to the land and water becomes more visible with each passing day.

As the season continues to unfold, this edition is a reminder that even small steps, taken now, can grow into lasting impact for the watershed we all share.

The Kawartha Conservation Team

GROW SOMETHING THAT GIVES BACK: KAWARTHA CONSERVATION'S 2026 SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE RETURNS APRIL 7

There is something hopeful about this time of year. Even with snow still clinging to the ground and spring taking its time, the shift is happening. Beneath the surface, the growing season is already beginning. And for those looking to make a meaningful impact at home, Kawartha Conservation's 2026 Spring Native Plant Sale offers a simple, powerful way to do just that.

Launching April 7, this year's sale invites residents across the watershed to plant with purpose, supporting pollinators, strengthening shorelines, and restoring habitat, one garden at a time.

Planting for a Healthier Watershed

Native plants are more than just beautiful additions to your yard. They are foundational to a healthy ecosystem. Adapted to local conditions, they require less water, less maintenance, and provide critical food and habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

Whether you are working with a large rural property, a suburban backyard, or a small shaded space, this year's sale has been designed to meet you where you are.

"We've built this year's plant kits to be approachable, impactful, and tailored to different landscapes across the watershed," says Stewardship Technician Julia Derue. "Whether you're just getting started or expanding an existing garden, these kits make it easy to plant native species that will thrive and support biodiversity right at home."

Eight Kits, Endless Impact

The 2026 sale features eight thoughtfully curated plant kits, each aligned with specific habitats and supported by easy to follow gardening guides:

- Pollinator Friendly Kit – 20 herbaceous plants
- Shady Oasis Kit – 22 herbaceous plants
- Waterfront Wonders Kit – 18 herbaceous plants
- Shoreline Tiny Forest Kit – 20 mixed shrubs and herbaceous plants
- Big Backyard Forest Kit – 26 predominantly trees and shrubs
- Small Backyard Forest Kit – 15 predominantly trees and shrubs
- Sense-ational Forest Kit – 16 predominantly trees and shrubs
- Rain Garden Kit – 62 mixed herbaceous plants and shrubs



Julia Derue, Stewardship Technician

Each kit is designed to take the guesswork out of planting, helping residents choose the right species for the right place. The ever popular Pollinator Friendly Kit returns again this year, featuring vibrant and ecologically important species like Butterfly Milkweed, Wild Bergamot, and Wild Columbine. These plants not only bring colour to your garden, they provide essential nectar and habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators that our ecosystems depend on.

Key Dates to Know

- Sale Opens: April 7
- Sale Closes: May 12
- Plant Pick-Up: Friday, May 22

Orders are limited and many kits sell out each year, so early ordering is encouraged.

A Small Action with Lasting Impact

Every native plant added to your landscape contributes to a larger story, one of resilience, restoration, and connection to the land and water that define the Kawartha watershed.

From supporting pollinators to improving water quality and reducing erosion, these small, intentional choices add up. This spring, as the season slowly unfolds, it is an opportunity to be part of that change. One plant, one garden, one property at a time.

Explore the 2026 Spring Native Plant Sale starting April 7 and grow something that gives back. Learning more and order at <https://www.kawarthaconservation.com/healthygardens>.



2026
Native Plant
Sale **OPENS APRIL 7**

Garden varieties include:

- Pollinator Friendly
- Shady Oasis
- Waterfront Wonders
- Rain Garden
- Shoreline Tiny Forest

Visit [kawarthaconservation.com/healthygardens](https://www.kawarthaconservation.com/healthygardens) for more information.



KAWARTHA
CONSERVATION

GROWING MORE THAN CROPS: HOW ALUS IS SUPPORTING FARMERS AND THE LAND IN 2026

Across the Kawartha watershed, farmers have always understood something fundamental: healthy land is the foundation of everything. Productive soil, clean water, and resilient landscapes don't just support agriculture, they support entire communities.

This spring, there's a new opportunity to build on that legacy.

On April 15, ALUS Kawartha Peterborough Northumberland (KPN) is hosting a free webinar designed to connect local farmers and landowners with practical tools, funding, and long-term support to help bring environmental stewardship projects to life.

Led by ALUS KPN Program Coordinator Joshua Noiseux, the session will introduce participants to a program that is rooted in a simple but powerful idea, that farmers should be recognized and supported for the environmental benefits their land provides.



Joshua Noiseux, Agricultural Stewardship Technician (right) at an event for Native Pollinators.

Supporting Working Lands

ALUS works with farmers to establish projects that enhance what are known as ecosystem services, the natural processes that improve soil health, store water, support biodiversity, and protect against erosion and extreme weather.

These aren't abstract concepts. On the ground, they look like windbreaks that protect fields from harsh weather, wetlands that hold water during heavy rains, and native grasslands that improve soil structure and provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

The upcoming webinar will walk through the full range of projects eligible for support in 2026, including:

- Perennial grassland establishment
- Native warm-season pasture and forage systems
- Tree planting, including afforestation, hedgerows, windbreaks, and silvopasture
- Riparian and wetland buffers
- Wetland creation and enhancement
- Flexible, farmer-driven project options tailored to individual properties

Whether the goal is improving productivity, addressing problem areas, or enhancing environmental performance, the program is designed to meet farmers where they are.

A Different Kind of Funding Model

What sets ALUS apart is its long-term approach.

ALUS can provide ongoing annual payments to support maintenance and ensure projects continue to deliver value over time. It's a model that recognizes stewardship as an ongoing commitment, not a one-time investment.

That means participants aren't just implementing projects, they're building systems that continue to work for their land year after year.

Local Knowledge, Local Impact

Programs like ALUS KPN are grounded in local relationships and local knowledge. Projects are voluntary, flexible, and shaped in partnership with the people who know the land best.

For farmers in the Kawartha, Peterborough, Northumberland region, this creates an opportunity to take practical steps that align with both environmental goals and farm operations, without sacrificing productivity or independence.

Join the Conversation

The April 15 webinar offers a chance to learn more, ask questions, and explore what stewardship could look like on your land in 2026.

Webinar Details

April 15, 2026

12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Online via Zoom

Free to attend

Participants who register will receive a Zoom link by email ahead of the session.

Whether you're looking to improve soil health, manage water more effectively, or explore new opportunities for your land, this session is a starting point for what's possible.

Register now to reserve your spot and learn how ALUS can support your goals in 2026 at

<https://events.kawarthaconservation.com>.



ALUS
KAWARTHAS
PETERBOROUGH
NORTHUMBERLAND

On Farm Environmental Projects
Available Supports in 2026

Free Webinar
with ALUS KPN Program Coordinator Joshua Noiseux

Wednesday April 15 - 12:00pm - 1:00pm
Online - Zoom Register to Receive Link

SAVE THE DATE: SPRING FLING IS RETURNING!

Spring has a way of drawing people back outside, back to the trails, the trees, and the simple joy of spending time together in nature. This year, the Kawartha Conservation Foundation is inviting the community to do just that, with the return of its much-loved Spring Fling.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and plan to spend a spring morning at Ken Reid Conservation Area reconnecting with nature and community. The event is open to everyone, with activities offered by donation, making it an accessible and welcoming day for families, friends, and neighbours alike.

Spring Fling has become a seasonal tradition, offering a chance to celebrate the arrival of warmer days while experiencing the natural beauty of the Kawartha watershed. Whether you are visiting for the first time or returning as part of your annual spring routine, the event is designed to be relaxed, engaging, and rooted in the outdoors.

This year's event will feature a wide range of activities for all ages. Visitors can take part in a scavenger hunt, stroll along a storybook walk, or enjoy the unique experience of feeding chickadees by hand. A guided wildflower walk, departing from the Field Centre, will offer a closer look at the early blooms of the season and the ecological importance of native plants.

Families and children can enjoy hands-on craft activities, test their skills with lawn games like cornhole, giant Jenga, and checkers, or try their luck guessing the number of treats in the jelly bean jar. For those looking to explore a little further, the Talking Forest Trail offers a 2.22-kilometre interactive experience that takes approximately one hour to complete.

Throughout the day, a campfire will provide a warm and welcoming place to gather, relax, and take in the sights and sounds of spring.

At its heart, Spring Fling is about more than just activities. It is an opportunity to connect with the land, learn about the work being done to protect local natural spaces, and celebrate the role that conservation plays in the health and vibrancy of the community.

More details will be shared as the event approaches, but for now, the invitation is simple: save the date, bring your sense of curiosity, and join us in celebrating spring on May 9.



A LEGACY THAT LASTS

Many of us feel a deep connection to the natural places that shape our lives - the lakes we paddle, the forests we walk through, and the green spaces where families gather, explore, and create lasting memories. Through the Kawartha Conservation Foundation, supporters have an opportunity to help ensure these places are protected for generations to come.

One meaningful way to do that is through legacy giving, also known as leaving a charitable gift in your Will.

A legacy gift allows you to support the causes you care about in the future without affecting your finances today. By including a charitable donation in your Will, you can create a lasting impact that continues long after your lifetime.

For the Kawartha Conservation Foundation, these gifts play an important role in supporting the work of Kawartha Conservation. Donations help protect natural areas, restore habitat, support environmental education, and care for the forests, wetlands, lakes, and rivers that make our watershed so special.

Legacy giving is about more than financial support. It reflects the values we hold about the environment and the future we want to leave behind.

A gift in your Will can help ensure that the trails we walk today, the wildlife we see in our forests, and the clean water flowing through our lakes and rivers will still be here for the next generation. It is a way to help protect the places that matter most, not just for today, but for our children, our grandchildren, and the generations that follow.

Many people are surprised to learn that leaving a charitable gift in their Will does not mean choosing between supporting family and supporting the causes they care about. Even a small portion of an estate can create a meaningful legacy while still providing for loved ones.

By including the Kawartha Conservation Foundation in your estate plans, you can help ensure that the work of protecting our natural environment continues well into the future.

A legacy gift is more than a donation. It is a promise to the land, the water, and the generations who will one day walk these same trails.

Learn more about Legacy Giving and the benefits at willpower.ca.

**KAWARTHA
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**



**CONNECTING PEOPLE
WITH NATURE**

SAVE THE DATE: STATE OF THE LAKES SYMPOSIUM 2026

Kawartha Conservation invites you to mark your calendar for the State of the Lakes Symposium, taking place on Friday, September 18, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Fenelon Falls Community Centre.

This full-day symposium will bring together researchers, municipal and government representatives, industry professionals, community organizations, and local residents for a focused and meaningful conversation about the health of our lakes and the future of the watershed.

Through a series of presentations and discussions, the day will explore key themes including lake health, watershed science, stewardship practices, and the emerging challenges and opportunities facing our region. The symposium is designed to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and strengthen connections among those who care about protecting and sustaining our water resources.

Whether you are working in the field, supporting local initiatives, or simply have an interest in the health of our lakes, this event will offer valuable insights and opportunities to engage.

Lunch will be provided. Additional details, including the agenda and registration information, will be shared in the coming months.

The graphic features a stylized landscape with a large yellow and orange sun rising over a blue lake. The text 'State of the Lakes Symposium' is arched over the sun. Below the landscape, a dark blue banner contains the text 'Save The Date' in white, followed by 'Learn about the Health, Science, Ecology and Economy of the Kawartha Lakes' in white. A green banner below that contains 'Friday, September 18, 2026 | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.' and 'Fenelon Falls Community Centre' in white. At the bottom, a dark blue banner lists 'Speakers', 'Panel Sessions', 'Vendor Booths', 'Networking Opportunities', and 'Lunch Included' in white, followed by the website 'KawarthaConservation.com/StateoftheLakes' and the Kawartha Conservation logo.

State of the Lakes Symposium

Save The Date

Learn about the Health, Science, Ecology and Economy of the Kawartha Lakes

Friday, September 18, 2026 | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Fenelon Falls Community Centre

Speakers
Panel Sessions
Vendor Booths
Networking Opportunities
Lunch Included

KawarthaConservation.com/StateoftheLakes


KAWARTHA
CONSERVATION

Save the date and join us for an important day of learning, collaboration, and conversation.

For more information on how Kawartha Conservation can help.
Conservation Lands: conservationareas@kawarthaconservation.com
General info: geninfo@kawarthaconservation.com
Permitting: permits@kawarthaconservation.com
Planning: planning@kawarthaconservation.com