



ENVIRONMENTAL WATER PROGRAM

Skills training to meet a community's vision

While working with many Indigenous communities, we have heard time and again their vision of Indigenous-led land management. Communities want to manage their water resources and track the effects of industry and climate change. As a result, they are seeking ways to strengthen their technical capacity to do so.

Environmental technical training is a well-established field. What sets Water First apart is our approach. First, we consult with our Indigenous partners about their long-term environmental water goals. By understanding their goals, we help to determine priority areas and local training needs. Our Environmental Water Program is ready to address these training needs.

As an organization, we have eight years of experience providing hands-on training and education programs in over 80 Indigenous communities in Canada.

24

Communities we've
worked with

8

Fish Habitat Restoration
Training Projects

17

Water Quality Related
Training Projects





Training designed to meet capacity needs

Based on local training needs, we design a custom training program related to fish habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, mapping, and data management. A custom training aligned with community identified goals and needs. As such, the Environmental Water Program is adaptable to meet individuals and communities where they are at.

Project completed by the community for the community

Our training incorporates an environmental water project. Project-based training provides a way to apply new knowledge and skills out on the water. The long term goals of the community inform and guide which project is carried out. A project completed for a community, by a community, bringing invaluable experience and increased confidence through the process.

We are currently working on three multi-year training projects with the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach and the Innu Nation of Matimekush-Lac John to study the health of the local fish populations and their habitat. These training projects help build capacity for 8 local community members, like Lawrence Mameanskum. With regular trips, our staff stay connected with the interns, regularly assess the technical capacity needs, and provide training and support to address those needs.

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“I hope I can share my experiences and knowledge with the younger generation, and teach them about the restoration and conservation of our land.”

**Lawrence Mameanskum, Water First Intern
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach**





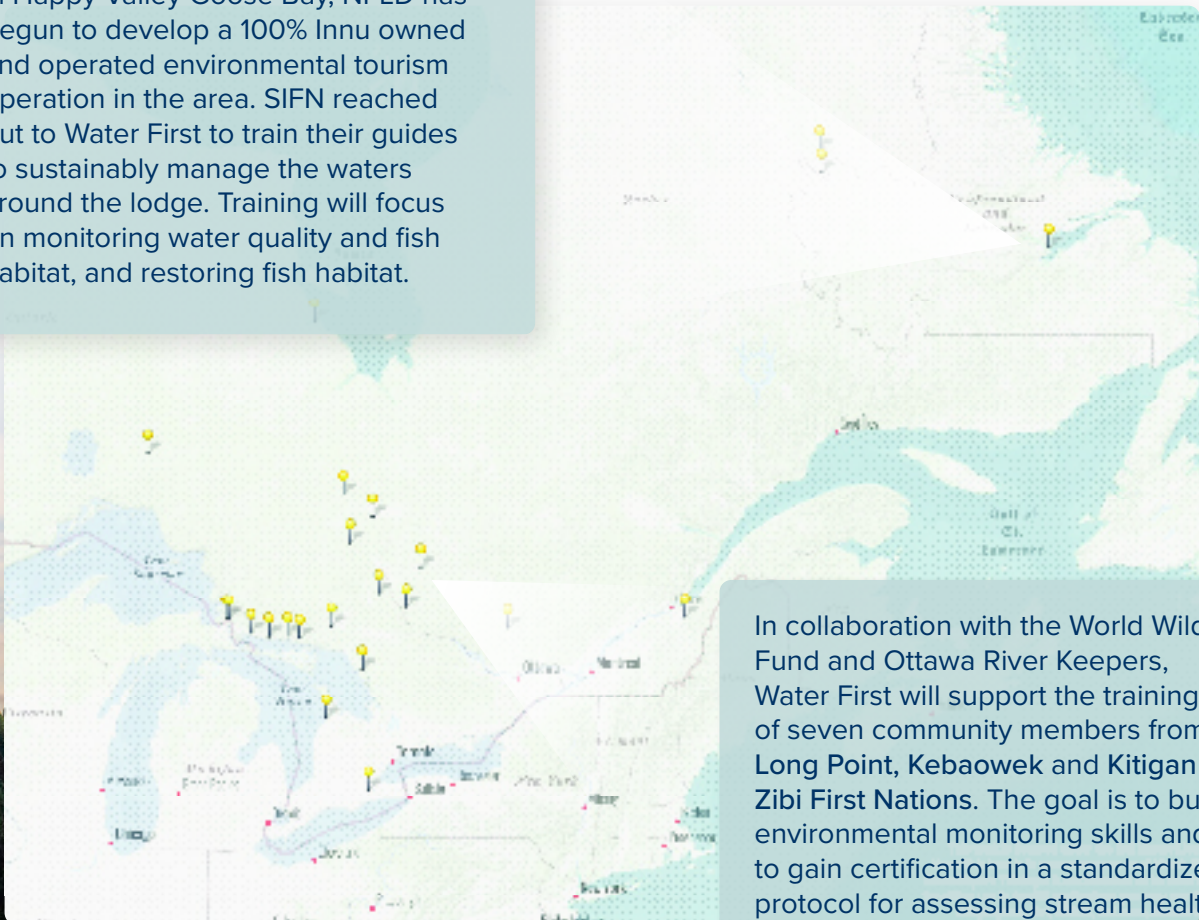
McKaylii Jawbone, Water First Alumni
Kebaowek First Nation

McKaylii trained with Water First through a two-year fish habitat restoration project. The project involved constructing three large walleye spawning shoals. Restoration sites were identified in consultation with community Elders, restoration biologists and Water First staff.

She created [this video](#) to inspire and encourage others to join an internship with Water First.

Exciting Collaborations Ahead

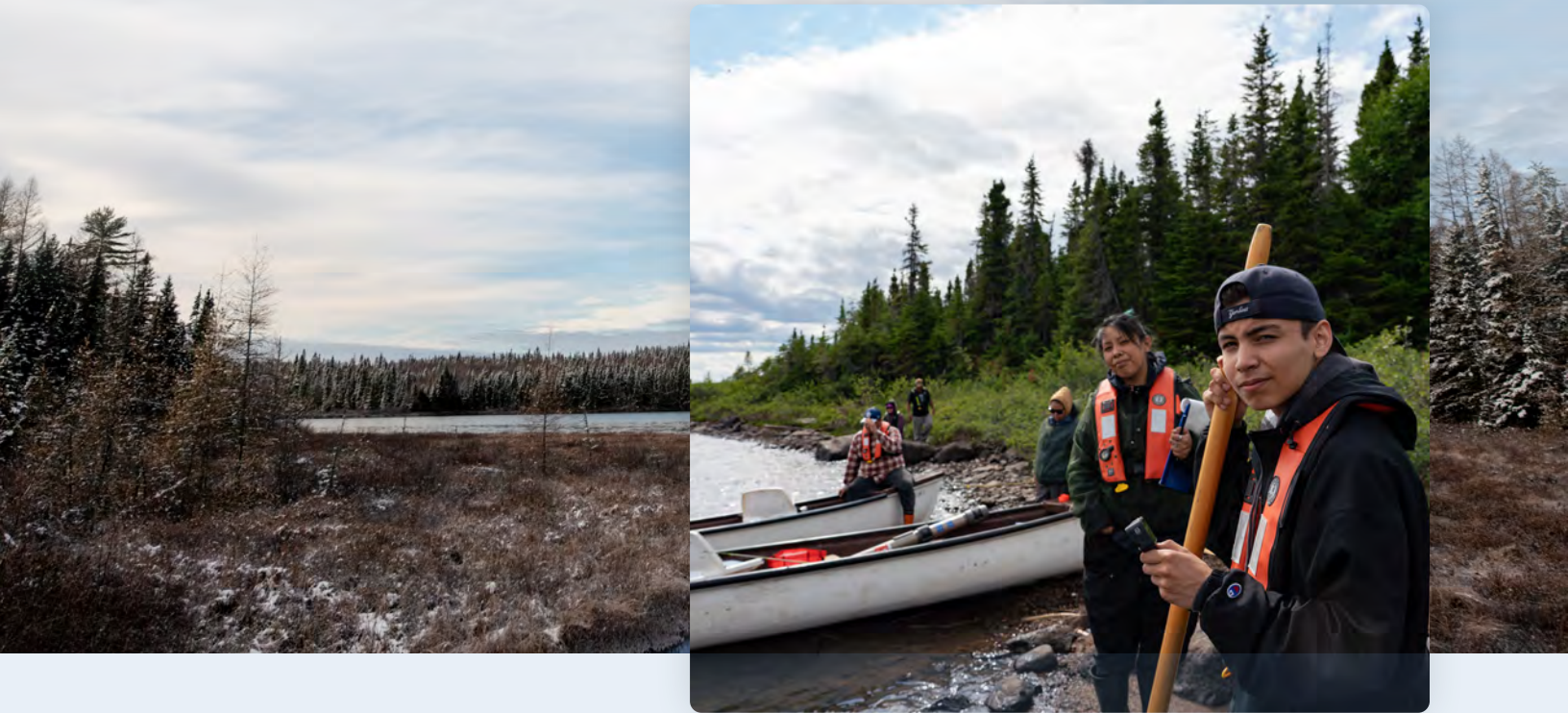
Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation (SIFN) in Happy Valley Goose Bay, NFLD has begun to develop a 100% Innu owned and operated environmental tourism operation in the area. SIFN reached out to Water First to train their guides to sustainably manage the waters around the lodge. Training will focus on monitoring water quality and fish habitat, and restoring fish habitat.



In collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund and Ottawa River Keepers, Water First will support the training of seven community members from Long Point, Kebaowek and Kitigan Zibi First Nations. The goal is to build environmental monitoring skills and to gain certification in a standardized protocol for assessing stream health called CABIN.

Building trust and nurturing meaningful relationships

This is the heart of our work. Our approach of consultation, collaboration and alignment to long term goals and training needs sets us apart. It is more challenging to deliver. However, our program helps to strengthen communities in a meaningful way with sustainable outcomes. This puts our Indigenous partners well on their way toward a more active role in managing and stewarding their water resources for the long term.



*COVID Adaptations

Water First recognizes the vulnerability of remote communities in light of COVID-19 and we completely defer to the decisions of local leaders. At this time, Water First is only visiting communities where we have been invited, with approval from local leadership in writing and with adherence to all appropriate safety measures. If travel is not considered safe, we are experienced at facilitating live telephone and video instruction, and/or mailing resources to program partners, to ensure ongoing program delivery.

Water First is a registered charitable organization founded in 2009, dedicated to partnering with Indigenous communities to resolve local water challenges through education, training and meaningful collaboration.

For more information, contact Ami Gopal, Director of Development at ami.gopal@waterfirst.ngo or 1-800-970-8467 ext. 106



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