

#MuchMoreThanWater

Welcoming autumn is about much more than just the change of a season. It's the continuation of a cycle, and a time to reflect and prepare for the winter ahead. Cycles like this are nurtured at Water First as well. From supporting interns as they become mentors and leaders, to building long-term relationships in Indigenous communities across Canada, we're proud of the many ways that our work is about #MuchMoreThanWater. Thank you and Miigwech for your ongoing support.

Celebrating the First Graduates of the EWI!

Congratulations to the very first graduating class of the Environmental Water Internship! The 15-month program in partnership with Mamaweswen, The North Shore Tribal Council, led interns through 2,000 hours of skills and technical training both in the classroom and on the land.

Upon graduation, participants become part of the Water First Alumni Network, where they can connect with other past interns and find information related to their industry and career, including mentorship opportunities, job boards, and further certification opportunities. Read more: waterfirst.ngo/ewi-grad

Great job, Class of '25!

The EWI is Now ECO Canada Certified

After a full audit, the Environmental Careers Organization of Canada (ECO Canada) has accredited the Environmental Water Internship (EWI) program through their Environmental Training Course Certification process. Graduates of the EWI program will receive three certifications:

Water Quality | Environmental Data | Fish Conservation

Graduates will also receive the ECO Canada seal for completion of the entire program including an Independent Monitoring Project. This is a really exciting step forward for the Environmental Water Internship and its participants!

Hands-on, Feet-wet Learning

Water First's School Water Team embraces a learning philosophy that prioritizes experiential, or land-based learning. From testing water quality to studying fish habitats, every lesson connects students to their environment, while fostering curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong dedication to protecting water.

This commitment means working with the community to include local Knowledge Holders, experts, and teachers in every workshop – because who knows the local environment better than the people that live there? It is this merging of western science and traditional, land-based knowledge sharing that makes the Water First programs truly unique.

And it's a learning philosophy that works. This approach acknowledges that learning is grounded in community values, customs, beliefs, culture, and history. It takes into account that all students have a different relationship to the institution of education, and offers students the chance to explore and express their interests in learning in a meaningful, collaborative way.



Changing Seasons, Changing Thinking

Communications Assistant Dominique Ireland of Oneida Nation of the Thames, demonstrates the Oneida Sign Language sign for harvest (figure 1), and the Oneida Sign Language sign for season followed by the sky, (figure 2), which emphasizes the concept of, “We put our corn in our traditional basket.”



New Drinking Water Advisory Statistics

Our latest research shows that as of August, 2025, 18% of First Nations across Canada are currently under a drinking water advisory – a number that rises to 32% in Ontario.

Calculating the number of drinking water advisories is a complex process. Water First relies on information from www.watertoday.ca, www.sac-isc.gc.ca, and www.fnha.ca.



A Legacy of Giving

In her life, Lynn Gibbon was a private person who deeply loved her friends, family and cats. She was a strong advocate for the importance of reading and worked at the Peterborough Public Library. When she was making her final arrangements and writing her will, she was adamant that the bulk of her estate go to charities that were near and dear to her heart. She selected Water First as one of the charitable beneficiaries of the residue of her

estate. Through this final act of generosity by Lynn, Water First will be able to bring more educational opportunities to Indigenous adults and youth for years to come!

[Visit waterfirst.ngo/donate](https://waterfirst.ngo/donate)



Intern to Graduate to Mentor

We recently visited Shawanaga First Nation, to meet with the community's lead water operator, Dyami Tuskin and water operator Spencer Welling—both Water First Drinking Water Internship Graduates! Together, they are mentoring a current Water First Intern, Jon Eagle. Dyami says he advocated for an intern because he knew just how much the Water First program and mentorship from other water operators helped his own career. Watching this cycle continue is just one of the many capacity-building successes of the Water First Internships!

Upcoming Important Dates

November

- 2-8** Treaties Week
- 7** International Inuit Day
- 8** Indigenous Veterans Day

December

- 21** Winter Solstice

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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