



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

Welcome Summer!

Splashing in a pool; dipping your toes in a cool lake; enjoying an icy glass of water – there are so many ways that water plays a role in our summer experience. At Water First, summer means taking time to enjoy all of those things. But it also means so much more.

Water plays such a big role in our warm weather activities. As you enjoy yours, we thank you for continuing to support Water First and the work we do alongside Indigenous communities to ensure that we all have access to safe, clean water this summer.

The First Environmental Water Internship has Launched!

Water First's inaugural **Environmental Water Internship** launched this month in collaboration with **Mamaweswen, The North Shore Tribal Council**. This 15-month internship will see participants from six First Nations communities take part in the program. Completion of the program can lead to Water First certifications in Water Quality, Environmental Data, and Fish Conservation.

With a goal of **building local capacity**, the Environmental Water Internship will **help keep highly-trained and skilled people in the community**, monitoring water systems and potential food sources.

"The opportunities for young people coming out of these types of programs are huge. There are many communities and organizations looking for employees, particularly within the water fields."

Allan Moffatt, Chief Executive Officer
Mamaweswen, The North Shore Tribal Council



Summer School? Yes, Please!

The learning doesn't stop when summer starts! Through the **Summer High School Credit Program**, students have the opportunity to participate in a community conservation or restoration project facilitated by Water First staff.

These curriculum-based lessons take place on the land and include **hands-on learning** and **visits from guest speakers**. Students love this program because they can be involved with their community while they earn a high school Geography credit!

This summer, you'll find the Water First team working with students in Chippewas of Rama First Nation, and Beausoleil First Nation, a community we're returning to for the **fourth summer in a row!**

Our Continuous Learning Journey

Continuous learning is one of the highest priorities for Water First staff. From online sharing circles to in-person workshops, **our commitment to cultural understanding lasts year-round.**

This spring, Water First staff had the privilege to take part in several learning opportunities, including the 7 Grandfather Teachings, Two-Spirit Understanding, and a series of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace workshops. We also enjoyed a half-day of Inuit Cultural Awareness Lessons during **our recent all-staff gathering in Creemore, Ontario.**
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During this training, we were joined by a few of our Indigenous Advisory Council members as well as Muckpaloo Ipeelie of the **Urban Inuit Identity Project**. Muckpaloo guided the group through engaging lessons on traditional Inuit storytelling, the history of Inuit culture in Canada, sport, and even throat singing!

We look forward to sharing more about our on-going learning journey together in future updates.



Heading to Creemore?

Water First is proud to support several local initiatives throughout our home office community of Creemore, Ontario and the surrounding area!

If you're visiting this summer, be sure to check out the **Awen Waterplay** splash park in nearby Collingwood, where Indigenous understanding of the water cycle and its importance is demonstrated to children and visitors of all ages through a fun, interactive waterplay feature. Water First consulted on the project with the city of Collingwood, and just recently installed informative, beautiful panels designed by our School Water Program to complement the play area.

And be sure to head back to the area this fall, as Water First takes part in **Creemore Festival of the Arts**, October 5-6. Water First will be hosting a weekend gallery featuring young Indigenous artists from **7th Generation Image Makers**.

Meet the Donors: The Green Fischer Foundation

When Ryan Fischer and his wife Ester Tsender were looking for a nonprofit organization to support through their arm of The Green Fischer Family Trust the couple had some very specific criteria in mind.

"Equality is important to me," said Ester, who holds a degree in chemical engineering and biosciences. "Gender equality, equality for minorities, and equality in terms of basic rights like access to clean water. And that led to Water First."

Ryan and Ester had followed news stories and social media posts highlighting the challenges that many Indigenous communities face in accessing clean, safe water. Water First's training and education model appealed to the couple, who were looking for an organization that could help support long-term solutions in Indigenous communities.

"Water First is unique in the way that it's not just a short-term solution to provide a limited supply of drinking water," said Ester, "members of the community are being trained to manage water systems which ensures clean water for the long-term."

Read the full story at waterfirst.ngo/news/meet-the-donors-green-fischer.



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

Colour your own water cycle panels! Enjoy this colouring and information page, inspired by the Awen Waterplay water cycle panels. Download it here: waterfirst.ngo/awen-colouring-sheet-full-blank-v2.

Important Upcoming Dates

August 12: International Youth Day

September 30: Orange Shirt Day (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)

October 4-6: Creemore Festival of the Arts

BECOME A Monthly Donor

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Become a monthly donor and be part of the work we're doing to support the next generation of water scientists through 2024 and beyond!

Your monthly gift will help ensure safe, sustainable water solutions in Indigenous communities across Canada.



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