



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

Many Indigenous communities are impacted by wildfires this summer. Building capacity through training and education is one way to prepare for the many issues affecting the land and the water. Our thoughts are with everyone impacted by the fires, and we maintain our dedication to offering programs that help prepare for, manage, and recover from these kinds of events in the long term.

At Water First, summer means field season! And that means partnering with Indigenous communities to help implement training and programming with a focus on environmental water management.

Your continued support helps ensure that Indigenous communities have access to training that leads to greater empowerment over critical environmental issues. Together we can help grow the network of local water experts ready to lead the way for the next generation.

Thank you to the co-editor of this season's newsletter, Communications Assistant and Summer Intern, Niall Cane.

The Second Environmental Water Internship Launches

The second Environmental Water Internship launched July 7, with 11 Indigenous adults from Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations getting out on the land and into the water.

Indigenous people in Canada are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation from mining, forestry, hydroelectric projects, and more. This training can lead to critical jobs in local Lands and Resources offices and throughout the environmental sector, supporting Indigenous leadership in environmental conservation for the long term.

The interns will complete more than 2,000 hours of hands-on education, alongside a network of technical trainers, community members and Water First program alumni.

Good luck interns, we can't wait to follow along with all of your success.



Celebrating AKRC Internship Graduation

There are eight new Indigenous Water Operators embarking on a future in water protection, after The Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council Interns celebrated their graduation in May!

Graduates completed more than 2,000 hours of hands-on training and earned certifications that are cornerstones of their future Water Operator careers.

Graduates were then invited to become part of the Water First Alumni Network, giving them access to continuing career development and education opportunities, as well as an ever-expanding professional network. Congratulations to the graduates!

(Summer) School's In!

Summer may be here but there's no rest for the School Water team as they transition from a busy school year to another busy summer semester of engaging Indigenous students in water science programming!

The regular school year wrapped with some impressive results, as more than 2,100 students from 32 different communities participated in programming. And true to our mandate to expand programming each year, 42% of those visits took place in BC, Alberta, Quebec, and Manitoba.

Now the team moves on to a robust summer program, returning to Rama First Nation for the second time, and Beausoleil First Nation for a record sixth time to offer students the high school-accredited GEOSTeam course. An A+ effort from the entire team this year!



A Legacy of Support

As an avid gardener, donor Ann understood that to coax something beautiful from the earth, you had to respect every part of it. From the insects to the people to the water, Ann believed in protecting and supporting the land and those around her. In life this meant not only working on her farm, but in a lab and morgue where she could help ensure that a journey's end was also handled with dignity and care. And when her own journey came to an end, Ann ensured that her legacy of support continued. Through instructions in her will, Ann was able to care for her beloved friends, and give generously to the local hospital, humane society, and Water First. Ann agreed strongly with Water First's mandate of education and training, and appreciated the resulting capacity-building potential that remained in Indigenous communities after the work was complete. Ann's thoughtful donation will continue to fill gaps in Water First's most urgent needs, supporting clean water solutions Indigenous communities across Canada. We are grateful for her trust in our work.

If you're interested in learning more about how your will can be a legacy for clean, safe water, please email Jessica Rawn, Sr. Manager of Development at jessica.rawn@waterfirst.ngo

A Water First Milestone

Water First has made it to 100 – partner communities, that is! We've reached a milestone in partnerships with 100 Indigenous communities across the country to date. From School Water visits to Drinking Water Internships and community-based environmental projects, we're making a difference in addressing local and evolving water challenges. This would not have been possible without the collaboration of everyone involved, from community members to trainers to our dedicated donors. But most of all we're grateful to the people that have participated in these programs, building capacity in their communities and protecting the water for generations to come.

Important upcoming dates

August

- 9** International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 12** International Youth Day

September

- 22** Fall equinox/first day of autumn
- 30** Orange Shirt Day (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)

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

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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