



RIPARIAN READS

Newsletter of the Kennebecasis Watershed Restoration Committee

Fall 2026



Birds' nest fungus

Photo by Nolan Boyd

Manager's Message

One of the realities that I must face is that I am no longer as young as I used to be. I can't carry as many trees through a planting site as I once could. I can't swing a fencing maul as long or as effectively as I did in my thirties. My hiking pace up a steep river valley is likely much slower than it used to be. I am blessed that I can still do most of this work but also blessed that I no longer have to. More often than I prefer nowadays, I am in the office while I direct our great team here at the KWRC on what work needs to get done.

A lot of the grunt work at the KWRC is done by our summer staff, and this is usually made up of young university students seeking experience while also trying to save money for their next semester. In our Summer 2026 issue of [Riparian Reads](#), you were introduced to some of our most recent summer staff. They did a heck of a job this past summer and were provided with a wide array of experiences. The KWRC strives to offer a

broad range of experiences for our summer staff. The various projects and tasks they work on help them build a resume chock-full of good stuff.

This role of providing employment in a rural area with limited environmental jobs is one we enjoy here at the KWRC. Over the last 10 years we have provided 47 youth with employment in the Sussex area. A number of these youth (14) spent more than one season with us and some advanced within the organization beyond simply being a Habitat Technician. Some of the summer staff have gone on to work within government departments, municipal staff, consulting, and other areas. Many have come back to visit and tell us how their time here at the KWRC helped prepare them for their next job and beyond. We are proud when former staff succeed and utilize what they have learned here in their new roles.

Being able to find meaningful summer jobs that relate to your schooling is important to many university students. Being able to find such work in their hometown is important as well, as it allows them to save more money and put more toward their tuition, books, or university living expenses. And being able to enjoy your summer job while working hard, is also a great way to earn that valuable cash. Collecting water samples, planting trees, completing fence maintenance, planting and weeding gardens, creating social media content, writing reports, entering data, building habitat boxes, completing habitat assessments, changing flat tires, installing silt curtains, writing a newsletter article, and more, provides so many skills and these are just some of the tasks our summer students get to do.

Not every youth has the same skill sets or strengths, and it is awesome to see youth excel at their strength, but just as enjoyable to watch them grow new skills and realize what they can accomplish. The KWRC typically recruits students starting in February of each year, so if you know someone who might be looking for such an experience, share this newsletter with them and have them reach out to us.

The future of conservation is in their hands, and it is worth wading into.

~ Ben Whalen
Project Manager



Counting for Something—This Season's Monitoring Stats

Working for a non-profit organization is a work of passion, done not for the financial reward but more for the thought that you are making a difference; that your work counts for something. Our watershed monitoring work here at the KWRC doesn't just count for something, it adds up to some big numbers. We monitor various things as a way to determine if our restoration work is making a difference, and while the numbers don't always clearly show what we want, they do add up.

In 2026 we continued our monitoring efforts thanks to a number of funding partners: 7 in total. This is the base number that we start with; the World Wildlife Foundation Canada, Canada Water Agency, Fisheries and Oceans, NB Environmental Trust Fund, NB Wildlife Trust Fund, Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, and Nature NB have all contributed funds to support our 2026-27 monitoring programs. This funding supports our work and allows us to build additional partnerships with various other stakeholders, at least 12 which includes ACAP-SJ, NB Invasive Species Council, Canadian Rivers Institute, Department of Environment, Department of Natural Resources, Atlantic Water Network, Atlantic DataStream, and the Agriculture Alliance of NB, along with landowners, municipalities, and businesses.

With that many partners we are able to put up some big data numbers. This past season we deployed 15 temperature loggers which will gather 135,000 data points. We sampled 15 water quality sites, 5 times, for 54 para-

meters—or another 4,050 data points. We completed 140 habitat assessment sheets over the 1400 meters of assessment completed and each sheet has 40 data points for another 5,600 data points. We monitored 7 sites 7 times for cyanobacteria and entered 8 data points each; another 392 data points. Lastly, we have completed electrofishing exercises on 5 sites with each site gathering 8 more data points (not counting the fish counted). Adding all this up, through the summer of 2026 the KWRC generated 145,082 data points.

Through this fall and winter, we will analyze this data and generate reports and plans for future work. We will create a “Watershed Report Card” and share with our stakeholders and funders. This is tedious work that is often undervalued. Raw data can be misunderstood or misinterpreted, and thus we try to make sure we capture it effectively and report on it in a way that is easy for the public to understand. With all these numbers, we can say that the Kennebecasis watershed is relatively healthy with some areas of concern—but without these numbers, you couldn't count on us the same way to know where to complete work or what work to do. We are grateful to our funders for continuing to support us and that the community continues to trust us as we strive to count for something.

~ Kate Vey
Monitoring Coordinator



Resilient Agriculture—RALP Recap

The Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) is a Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) initiative that funds beneficial management practices (BMPs) to enhance environmental stewardship on New Brunswick farms. Since March of 2024, RALP has been carried out by the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fisheries (DAAF).

RALP has the following outcomes:

- Greenhouse gas emission reductions
- Improved soil health
- Increased conservation and restoration of critical wildlife habitat
- Strengthened resilience of agricultural lands
- Improved water quality

RALP provides funding under three main categories:

- Reduced tillage
- Ponds and wetlands
- Pollinator habitat, critical and marginal landscapes, trees, riparian areas, and crop management

Over the years, several New Brunswick producers have used this program, including farmers in the Kennebecasis Watershed working with the KWRC. Through this partnership, three farmers have successfully obtained funding to create riparian setbacks including Walkerville Farms, Shipley Farms, and Brownsville Farms.

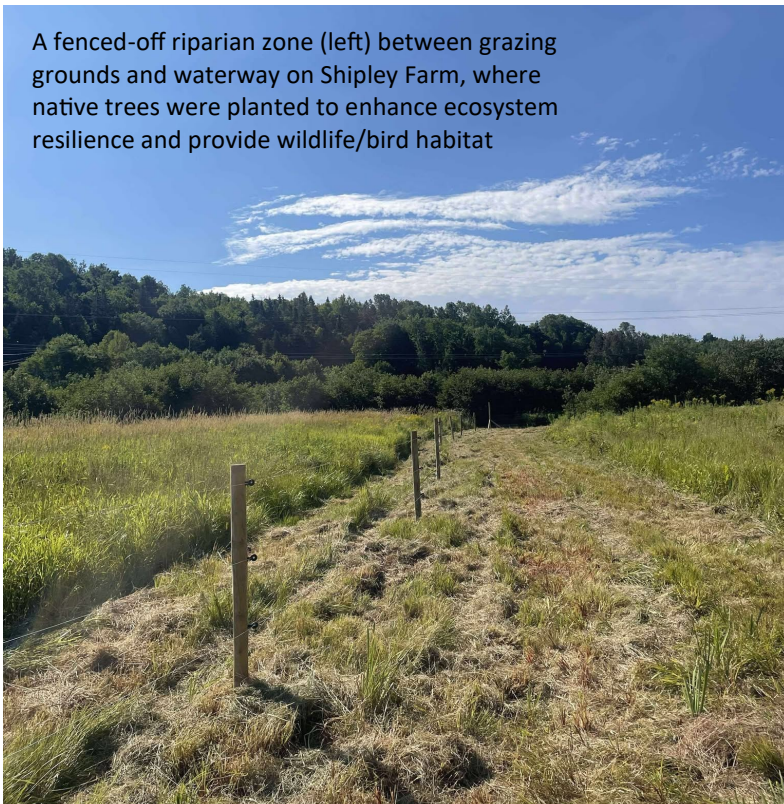
Although RALP runs through March 2028, it is our understanding that the majority of the funding has already been allocated. The KWRC encourages DAAF to consider extending the RALP or provide an alternative funding program to replace it. Sustained financial support is essential to build on this initial success and to help local farmers continue to implement BMPs within their agricultural operations.

~ Megan Thorpe

Agricultural Stewardship
Coordinator



A fenced-off riparian zone (left) between grazing grounds and waterway on Shipley Farm, where native trees were planted to enhance ecosystem resilience and provide wildlife/bird habitat



The KWRC 'riparian stop sign' - a reminder to all that we should leave a healthy setback!



If the Redd is a-Rockin'... Why Brook Trout Season Comes to a Close

Here in New Brunswick, another brook trout season has come to an end. As of September 15th, anglers can no longer target brook trout in the province, including within the Kennebecasis watershed. While it may be disappointing to put the trout gear away for another year, the seasonal change plays an important role in protecting our local brook trout populations.

By mid-September, brook trout are already beginning to stage and move toward colder tributaries and suitable spawning habitat. Closing the fishery during this period helps reduce disturbance and gives fish the best opportunity to reproduce successfully, which helps maintain healthy populations for future generations of anglers.

Changes in day length and water temperature are two of the main environmental cues that signal brook trout to prepare for spawning. During this time, the fish undergo noticeable physiological changes. Males often become more vibrant in colour (colouration will vary based on habitat) and develop a hooked lower jaw, known as a kype. Females begin directing more energy toward egg production and preparing suitable spawning habitat.

When spawning begins, females construct nests, known as redds, in well-oxygenated flowing areas with clean gravel. Using their tails, they move sediment to create a

depression where their eggs can be deposited and fertilized by males. The eggs are then covered with sediment, where they remain protected as they develop over the winter.

There are also several important fishing regulations within the Kennebecasis watershed that anglers should keep in mind. From April 15th to September 15th, a section of the river beginning at the bridge on McCully Station Road, extending upstream to where the Portage Vale Road meets the Green Road is designated catch and release, and artificial lure or fly only. Beginning July 1st, the entire main stem of the Kennebecasis becomes fly-fishing only.

These regulations, along with the September 15th closure, help protect brook trout during important stages of their life cycle, through taking away some of the pressure fishing can have on their populations. This will help our native brook trout remain healthy for years to come.

~ Nolan Boyd

Restoration Coordinator



Upcoming Autumn Events & Summer Recap

The Autumn Equinox is here, and many people celebrate this shift in season. The change is undeniable—mornings and evenings are crisp and cool, and the days will now become increasingly shorter than the nights. At the moment however, they are equal in length, which is fitting because this is a time of year for balance: we anticipate slowing down while we scramble to wrap up outdoor projects, gardening and preserving, etc. At the KWRC, after our summer students have returned to school, it is always a hustle to get our field projects, such as tree planting, finished before the frost.

If you're interested in contributing, we are asking volunteers to help us with **tree planting on October 17th**—location to be decided. No experience necessary! We are also hiring tree planters, if you're looking to gain field experience during a short-term gig. Send your resume and cover letter to ben.whalen@kennebecasisriver.org!

We will also be offering a **bat box building workshop** on the evening of October 21st in Sussex—build your own bat habitat to help support our native bat populations! Details will be posted to our socials very soon.

So although the season is slowing down, the KWRC is keeping busy. But the beginning of Autumn provides an opportunity to reflect on the summer's hard work and celebrate those successes with others—hence the many harvest festivals that take place this time of year. So allow me to recap and reflect on the many activities and events we have been able to carry out this summer.

So far this year, we have 44 'events' under our belt, which include events we have hosted for the community, markets we've participated in, presentations or tours we've given, or activities where we've engaged youth groups or summer camps. That's enough to say we are engaging the public or other groups for educational or

volunteer purposes more than once a week, and that takes a lot of work in planning and promotion to ensure people know about our events and are enticed to come. Yet we don't get the same numbers to attend as we used to. If you are reading this and realize you've not seen any of the events we've held this year, there is a [calendar on our website](#) where the dates are posted, with details to follow on our social media pages as soon as possible—particularly [Facebook](#), where events will be pinned at the top of our page. We had a variety of activities to get involved in this summer, and wouldn't want you to miss out on these opportunities next year!

We hosted three bioblitz events inviting participants to join us for scenic explorations in search of birds, plants, and bugs, respectively. We used the app [iNaturalist](#) to identify observations, which have all been added to a biodiversity database of the watershed—browse the Kennebecasis River Watershed project [here](#).

We also offered our Ripples & Roots nature camp for high school students again this year;



six students joined us for a week of outdoor learning and skill-building that could open doors for them later on.

As always we had several angling-related activities both with private groups and for the public such as our Youth Angling Day Camp, a Family Fly-Fishing Fun night, and Beginner's Fly-Fishing Workshop, plus a mini workshop for the Sussex School Age Child Care kids.

We invited volunteers to help plant native species in a pollinator garden (thanks to the Rotary Club of Hampton for lending their time), and to join us for a paddle on the Kennebecasis to learn about identifying invasive plants. We participated in the Love Your Covered Bridge event where kids could see some real live benthics (river bugs).

If nothing here piques your interest, please let us know what types of events you would be interested in seeing from us!

~ Ellen MacGillivray
Education Outreach
Coordinator



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