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World Water Day 2017: \$21,000 in funding for local water projects

News

LWF

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Left to right: Claire Herbert from the University of Manitoba; Katrina Froese, education coordinator at FortWhyte Alive; Alexis Kanu, LWF executive director; Ron Thiessen, executive director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Manitoba Chapter

On March 22 - World Water Day - LWF staff and supporters gathered at FortWhyte Alive in Winnipeg to celebrate our shared waters and announce \$21,000 in funding for four Manitoba-based projects.

LWF's [grants program](#) supports projects working to improve water quality in Lake Winnipeg and its watershed. Priority is given to those that address one or more of the eight actions to reduce phosphorus loading outlined in our flagship initiative, the [Lake Winnipeg Health Plan](#). Successful recipients were selected by LWF's board of directors as part of an annual submission process which sees projects from across the province and beyond apply for financial assistance ranging from \$500 to \$10,000.

"Across our vast watershed, researchers, educators and innovators are hard at work on solutions for Lake Winnipeg," says Alexis Kanu, LWF's executive director. "We're proud to be able to invest in those solutions - and what better way to celebrate World Water Day 2017 than to celebrate the passionate people behind this vital work?"

Successful 2016 grant recipients are:

- **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) - Manitoba Chapter** (\$5,000) for its project: "Conserving the Boreal Forest for the Health of Lake Winnipeg"
- **FortWhyte Alive** (\$5,000) for its project: "Winnipeg's Lake Winnipeg: Aquatic Education, Monitoring and Restoration towards Conservation"
- **The Town of Niverville** (\$5,000) for its project: "Niverville Lagoon Bioremediation Project"
- **University of Manitoba** (\$6,000) for its project: "Near real-time assessment of algal blooms and nutrients in the Lake Winnipeg Basin's other Great Lakes"

CPAWS - Manitoba will move forward with a community and stakeholder engagement process, created in partnership with Fisher River Cree Nation and the Manitoba government, that will explore opportunities to expand Fisher Bay Provincial Park and establish other protected areas in the region, located on the western side of Lake Winnipeg.

"We are grateful to LWF for championing the alliance of Manitobans working to protect and restore our beloved lake," says Ron Thiessen, executive director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) - Manitoba Chapter. "Our partnership with Fisher River Cree Nation aims to conserve the landscape that cleans and manages the flow of waters entering Lake Winnipeg, which is an essential component of its recovery. A heartfelt thanks to LWF for helping us to make this happen."

FortWhyte Alive is bringing together stakeholders, educators and the general public to develop opportunities for citizen science in urban freshwater

monitoring, using LWF's standardized water-sampling protocols.

"Water quality is of great importance to FortWhyte Alive. The central focus of our educational site in southwest Winnipeg are our five reclaimed clay pit lakes, which attract waterfowl, wildlife and people. We are excited to be partnering with LWF to showcase urban water monitoring to students and the public, as a great way to get involved in science-based research on nutrient inflows into Lake Winnipeg," says Katrina Froese, Education Coordinator at FortWhyte Alive.

Researchers at the University of Manitoba are studying water quality in Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Waterhen, combining satellite imagery with surface-water sampling and analysis to learn more about how nutrients may be contributing to algae blooms.

"Since the 1970s, only two studies for water quality have been conducted on Lake Manitoba, which is the 16th largest freshwater lake in the world, and none have been conducted on Lakes Winnipegosis or Waterhen," says Claire Herbert from the University of Manitoba. "With very little water-quality data about these lakes, we lack vital information about how changing climate conditions may be impacting algal bloom presence around communities who depend on these bodies of water for food and water. The funding from LWF will allow us to better engage these groups and provide them with tools to monitor for themselves."

The Town of Niverville has used the innovative approach of wetland bioremediation to decommission its former sewage lagoon, and will now further develop the site by planting native vegetation, installing footpaths and interpretive areas, and creating opportunities for additional research.

"Our town's use of wetland bioremediation is creating interest across Canada in the construction of sewage lagoons and the conservation of wetlands, thereby protecting our lakes for our future generation's enjoyment," says Jim Buys, Niverville Town Manager. "This project will become a site for enhancing wildlife habitat, soil and water remediation - and, in the process, will also provide environmental education and recreational opportunities for all Manitobans."

LWF's grants program is funded entirely through the ongoing generosity of LWF's supporters. Now, an [online crowdfunding campaign](#) is giving lake-lovers the opportunity to directly support future water projects with double the impact. In partnership with Desjardins Financial Security Investments Inc., we are aiming to raise at least \$3,000 for our 2017 grants program. Money raised will be supplemented by LWF's summer fundraising efforts to help support as many projects as possible.

"Our grants program leverages the positive power of collaboration," says Kanu. "LWF was founded around a kitchen table in 2005, and our supporters have always understood that small actions add up to make a big difference. Change happens when people come together. Now, thanks to Desjardins Financial Security Investments Inc., we will have an even greater collective impact on the health of our shared waters."

LWF's World Water Day [crowdfunding campaign](#) runs until March 31, 2017. Click [here](#) for more information on LWF's grants program. Click [here](#) for more information on past grant recipients.

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