



## Operation spray less: Watershed groups keep watch for late blight in P.E.I. potato fields

Summary of article published by Nancy Russell - CBC News, July 18, 2024

Six watershed groups across P.E.I. have partnered with the AgriWatershed Partnership, East Prince Agri-Environment Association, and local farmers to detect late blight in potatoes. The program, started by the AgriWatershed Partnership, aims to build relationships between farmers and watershed groups on P.E.I. and monitor late blight on the island.



Potato farmer Robin Steijn and Raena Parent from the Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association, shown in York, P.E.I., have gotten to know each other through the partnership project. (Ken Linton/CBC)

Late blight is a disease that affects solanaceous plants

(nightshade family), such as potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers. The catastrophic fungus-like micro-organism causes browning of vegetation and crops followed by rot. Gwen Vessey from the AgriWatershed Partnership expressed her excitement over the willingness of watershed groups to participate in this program and hopes that it will provide valuable information to P.E.I. potato farmers.

The Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association (WRTBWA) is one of the watershed groups participating in the program. Raena Parent, coordinator of the WRTBWA, explains that a Spornado device with a removeable cartridge is placed in a potato field. After a week, the cartridge is removed from the device and assessed for late blight spores. The group sees projects like these as critical in developing relationships with landowners and are essential for conducting work as a watershed group.

The WRTBWA has partnered with Robin Steijn to monitor late blight in his potato fields. Steijn claims that the project provides farmers with valuable information on how to manage late blight in their fields and allows watershed groups to understand the work involved in farming. Currently, late blight has yet to be detected by the WRTBWA.

The P.E.I. Potato Board conducted similar tests over the past few years, and according to board member Ryan Barrett, cartridges picked up spores for the first time in 2023. Despite the sample cartridges picking up late blight spores, blight was affected by none of the fields in the vicinity. Knowing if late blight spores are present can help farmers assess the frequency at which they should spray their crops for blight.

*The original CBC News story can be found at:*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-blight-monitoring-watershed-groups-1.7266559>

**You can donate to support our work at:**

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/winter-river-tracadie-bay-watershed-association-inc/>

## Working in the Heat

Working in high temperatures can pose serious health risks. Exposure to heat can affect the body’s ability to regulate temperature, which can lead to dangerous conditions such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, and, in serious cases, heat stroke. Furthermore, working in the heat can decrease job productivity, and impair judgement, thus increasing the risk of workplace injuries.

The Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association is committed to keeping its employees safe and healthy when working in high temperatures. Our organization has implemented safety precautions to protect staff members from the stress of working in the heat:

- ◆ Frequent water breaks with access to additional water in portable thermos
- ◆ Earlier start times (6:00-7:00 AM) to avoid exposure to the hottest hours of the day
- ◆ During hot weather events, Gatorade is provided to ensure staff members stay hydrated.
- ◆ When temperatures surpass 30 degrees Celsius, staff are either given less strenuous tasks that can be done in the shade or cool streams, or they return to our office to complete indoor tasks.

## Thank You to Our Staff of 2023-24

Field Crew: Jessica D., Liam J., Will I., Cole M., & Reid M.

Assistant Coordinator: Lyndsay M.

Watershed Coordinator: Raena P.



A few 2023 staff members after completing a brush mat. Left to right: Cole M., Will I., Jess D., & Reid M.

Take a look at our scorecard below to see everything they accomplished last year



## Watershed Management Plan: 2023-24 Fiscal Year Scorecard

Objectives Strategies

LAND	WETLANDS/RIVERS	WATER QUANTITY	COMMUNITY
<b>Improve</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Buffer zones</li> <li>❖ Forest management                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Planting, patch cuts, thinning</li> <li>➢ Post Fiona assessments</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Watershed health indicators                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Soil health testing</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Wildlife habitat                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Brush piles, insect hotels, amphibian boards</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Reduce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Soil erosion (roads &amp; farms)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Survey with watershed farmers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Improve/protect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Surface water quality                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Post Fiona stream assessments</li> <li>➢ Brush mats, blockage removal</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Groundwater quality</li> <li>❖ Bay, estuary &amp; freshwater ecosystems</li> <li>❖ Habitat connectivity                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Replace/repair culverts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Reduce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Water extraction                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase water conservation</li> <li>➢ Track Charlottetown pumping data</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Increase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Public policy influence                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Gov of PEI, City of Charlottetown</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Groundwater infiltration                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Tree planting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increase watershed knowledge                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Youth field trips</li> <li>➢ Social media posts, newsletters, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Outdoor activities that promote watershed                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Fall tree planting event</li> <li>➢ Creating walking trail at WRTBWA owned land</li> <li>➢ Shoreline cleanup event</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Actions

Metric & Goal	Done	Metric & Goal	Done	Metric & Goal	Done	Metric & Goal	Done
Trees planted	3,000 <span style="color: green;">3,427</span>	Brush mats built	10 <span style="color: green;">10</span>	Meetings with Government	2 <span style="color: green;">2</span>	Events hosted	3 <span style="color: green;">4</span>
Brush piles	12 <span style="color: green;">20</span>	River enhanced (km)	7 <span style="color: green;">13.3</span>	Sites monitored	14 <span style="color: red;">13</span>	Media articles	2 <span style="color: green;">2</span>
Total area improved (ha)	25 <span style="color: red;">23.01</span>	Culverts fixed	1 <span style="color: green;">1</span>	Charlottetown Water Extraction vs PEI Gov policy Using Joose recommendations. % by wellfield (100% meets policy) 2023 calendar year > <b>Suffolk very low, Brackley too high</b>	M: 90 <span style="color: green;">M: 91</span>	Social media posts	50 <span style="color: green;">50</span>
Invasive species removed (kg)	100 <span style="color: green;">120</span>	Waste collected (kg)	500 <span style="color: green;">798</span>		S: 60 <span style="color: red;">S: 31</span>	Volunteers	30 <span style="color: green;">48</span>
		Stream Assessed (km)	20 <span style="color: red;">14.97</span>	U: 100 <span style="color: green;">U: 95</span>	Youth involved	40 <span style="color: green;">105</span>	
				B: 100 <span style="color: red;">B: 120</span>			

Notes

Last updated: 2024-04-16

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Full management plan available online at <http://wintertracadie.ca/documents/wmp-2/>

Goal achieved
Goal not achieved
Updated info
Need data



# Thank You Staff of 2024-25!

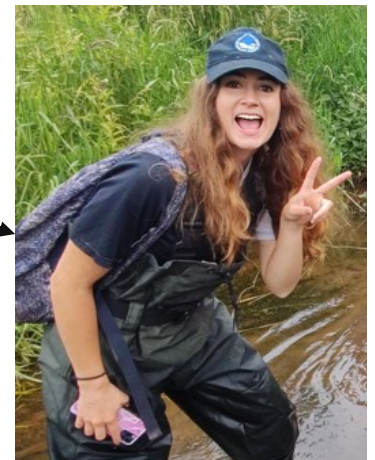
**Jehann C.**

This field season is Jehaan's first year in the watershed world. Jehaan is studying at UPEI and working towards a Bachelor of Environmental Studies.



**Jess D.**

This field season is Jess's third year with WRTBWA and her first year as a supervisor. Jess graduated from UPEI with a Bachelor of Environmental Science.



**Will I.**

This field season is Will's second year with WRTBWA and their first year as a supervisor. Will graduated from UPEI with a Bachelor of Science, Honours in Biology.



**Pooja K.**

This field season is Pooja's first year in the watershed world. Pooja is currently studying Environmental Science and Applied Technology at Holland College.

**Cole M.**

This is Cole's second year with WRTBWA and his first year as chainsaw operator and assistant supervisor. Cole graduated from UPEI with a Bachelor of Science.



**Nik N.**

This field season is Nik's first year in the watershed world and he has been the handyman behind our bird box building. Nik is going into his final year of high school. Best of luck!



**Raena P.**

This is Raena's fifth year with WRTBWA and second field season as Watershed Coordinator. She has a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Environmental Studies from UPEI.



**Em W.**

This field season is Em's first year in the watershed world and their first year as a chainsaw operator. Em graduated from Dalhousie University with a degree in Neuroscience.



# Upcoming Event

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held at the Glenaladale School House (257 Blooming Point Rd) on **Wednesday, October 16th at 7pm**. The agenda includes a presentation by guest speaker **Melissa Lazcano** (PEI Watershed Alliance) on an upcoming tree nursery at Glenaladale Heritage Estate. There will also be updates made to our **bylaws** and reports by the Watershed Coordinator, and Board of Directors Chair, and Treasurer.

## Contact Us

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*Show your support by following our social media pages. Having more visible supporters helps us get more grant funding.*

If you would like to help us shape the future, join our Board of Directors.

To inquire, see contact information below.

We would like to thank our funding partners for their support of our work in 2023.

# Canada

- Employment and Social Development Canada: Canada Summer Jobs
- Environment and Climate Change Canada: EcoAction Community Funding Program
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: Youth Employment and



- Skills PEI: Post Secondary Program
- Watershed Management Fund

City of Charlottetown:  
Water & Sewer Utility



- PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund



- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association:  
Green Jobs Initiative



- PEI Aquaculture Alliance



WINTER RIVER - TRACADIE BAY  
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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