

2026-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

BAXTER CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE





BAXTER CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 VISION AND MISSION**
- 4 MESSAGE FROM THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- 6 ABOUT THE
ORGANIZATION**
- 7 FIRST NATIONS LAND
AND TREATY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
- 8 THE BAXTER CREEK
WATERSHED**
- 9 VALUES AND GUIDING
PRINCIPLES**
- 10 SUCCESSMAP™
PLANNING AND
ENGAGEMENT PROCESS**
- 11 THREE OVERARCHING
GOALS**
- 12 OBJECTIVES SUMMARY
2026-2029**
- 13 MEASURING RESULTS**

STRENGTHENING OUR WATERSHED, STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY



VISION

A thriving Baxter Creek watershed where First Nations knowledge and western science unite to protect ecological health, engage young people and families as watershed stewards, and ensure that land, water, and community thrive for future generations.

MISSION

We generate scientific evidence informed by First Nations wisdom to protect watershed health and empower communities, governments, and First Nations to make informed stewardship decisions.





Message from the Board of Directors

“ We are pleased to present **Strengthening Our Watershed, Strengthening Our Community 2025-2029**,
our updated strategic plan. ”

We are proud to present the “Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance Strategic Plan 2026-2029. This plan outlines our direction for the next four years and recognizes the critical role that our organization plays as an evidence-based community resource. Together with our partners, we will provide watershed knowledge based on scientific evidence and informed by Indigenous Knowledge to support informed decision-making across the Baxter Creek watershed and beyond.

BCWA has emerged as a distinctive voice in environmental conservation, distinguished by strong First Nations partnerships, scientific rigor supported by spatial analysis and mapping technology, and regionally recognized educational programming. Since our founding, we have demonstrated leadership in our ability to generate credible scientific evidence while building authentic relationships rooted in mutual respect and shared vision with First Nations communities. Our collaborative approach to watershed stewardship has resulted in 34 student alumni as of 2025 engaged in transformative research, partnerships spanning multiple universities, colleges, and technical capabilities that exceed even well-funded environmental organizations.

Our organization stands at a critical juncture. To sustain these accomplishments, we must grow from operating entirely on a volunteer capacity to implementing the necessary professional infrastructure to scale our impact and to match our vision. Our strategic priorities will focus on advancing First Nations and Indigenous partnerships as a core

strategic pillar. Additionally, we will advance professional staffing, formalize our identity as an evidence-based organization, expand our educational mission, and build community awareness.

The opportunity before us is transformative. The 105-acre former Millbrook Correctional Centre property presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a collaborative two-eyed seeing ecological learning hub with First Nations partners. Our mapping capacity represents untapped revenue generation potential. Our educational programming can reach exponentially more students. Our approach to watershed stewardship and our technical capabilities can inform and support other watershed organizations across the province and beyond.

This strategic plan is the result of comprehensive stakeholder consultation, qualitative thematic analysis of interviews with First Nations leadership, board members, external partners, and past contributors. We are grateful for the Board’s alignment, the emerging consensus around our evidence-based identity, and the clarity that has emerged around our greatest opportunities and most urgent challenges.

Our future is bright, and our path is clear. Over the next four years, BCWA will establish the professional foundation necessary for sustainable growth while remaining faithful to our core mission: generating and sharing evidence through scientific information and informed by Indigenous knowledge from First Nation partners to support watershed decision-making.

BCWA Board of Directors 2025-2026



CHRIS GRAYSON

Chair



GRAHAM WHITELAW

Vice Chair



WILMA ARMSTRONG

Director



CRAIG ONAFRYCHUK

Secretary, Community Engagement
& Education Committee Chair



HEATHER KLYN-HESSELINK

Director



NOEL KERIN

Director, Research Working Group
Member



MARK BATTSON

Treasurer, Governance Committee
Chair



STEFANIE COXE

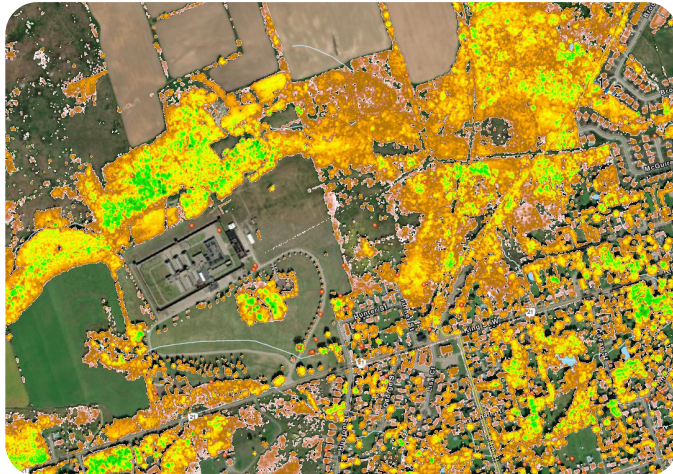
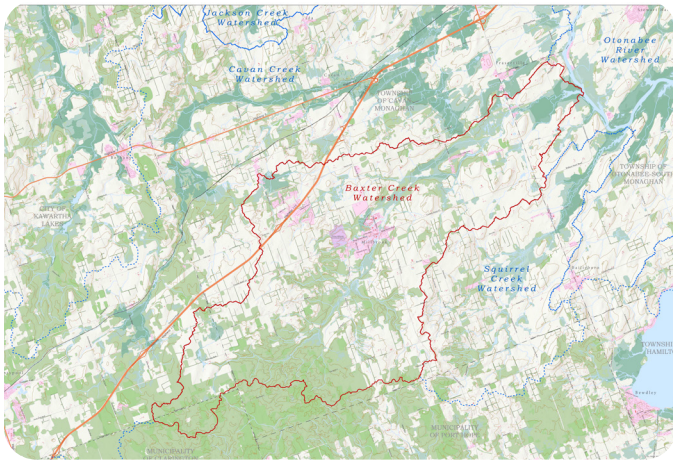
Director

The Board of Directors thanks the following past Board members who provided important input in the Strategic Plan:

Mark Davidson, Community Engagement & Education Committee Member
Mike Howard, Community Engagement & Education Committee Member

BCWA's Foundation for Success

About the Organization



In collaboration with our partners, we will provide watershed knowledge that brings together Western scientific evidence and Indigenous ecological knowledge to guide informed decision making across the Baxter Creek watershed and beyond. Operating within the Township of Cavan-Monaghan and the Baxter Creek watershed region, BCWA conducts water quality monitoring, GIS mapping, ecological research, and environmental education programming. We produce scientific evidence and provide it to our community and decision-makers to inform wise actions and decisions for watershed protection.

Founded through diversity and united by passion, BCWA is driven by a commitment to protecting and enhancing the health of the watershed for future generations of humans and wildlife. BCWA works actively with engaged volunteers, a dedicated Board of Directors, elected Committee non-voting members, elected Advisors, an expanding network of academic partners, and increasingly strong relationships with Williams Treaties First Nations communities.

BCWA's greatest assets are our world-class First Nations partnerships, scientifically grounded GIS mapping and technology capabilities, leadership in environmental education, and our demonstrated ability to generate evidence-based scientific outputs that can inform policy and planning decisions.





First Nations Land and Treaty Acknowledgement

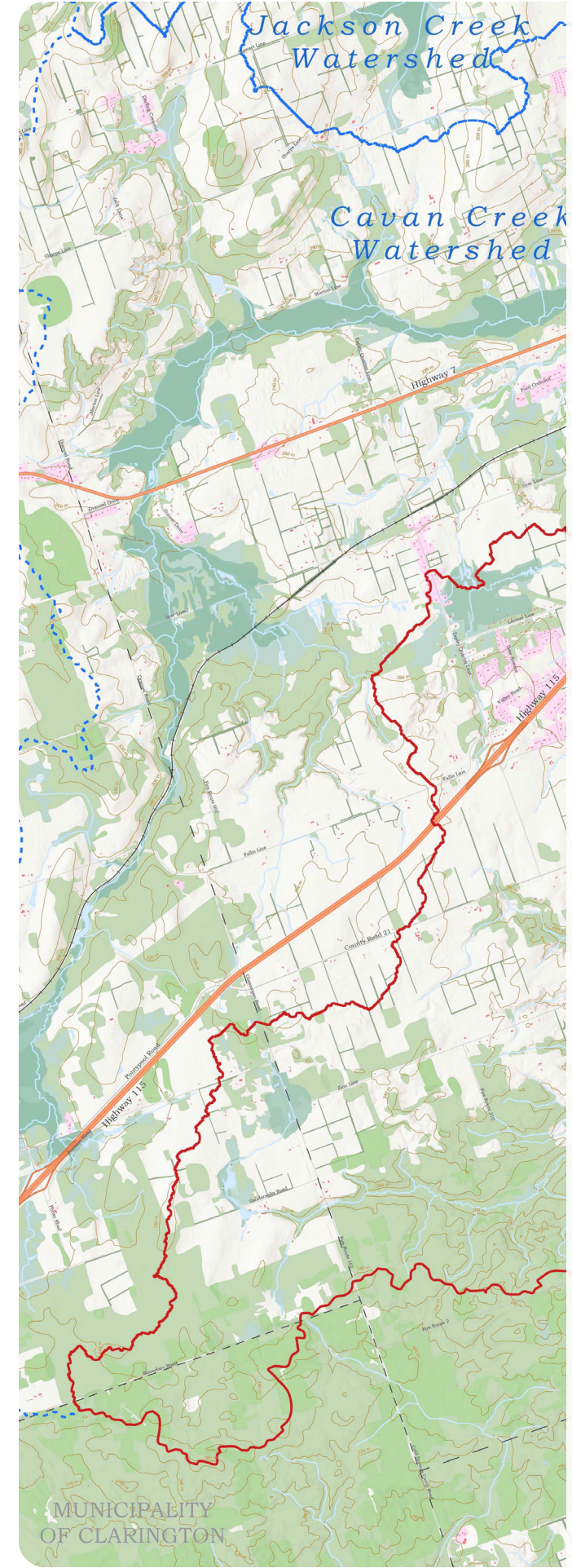


We respectfully acknowledge that we work and are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples who have inhabited these lands from time immemorial. As settlers and treaty people, we are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on these lands through treaties with First Nations and we thank all generations of Indigenous peoples who were the original caretakers and stewards of these lands for thousands of years. We recognize that these lands and waters have been cared for through Indigenous laws, knowledge systems, and stewardship practices since time immemorial, and we seek to learn from and respect those teachings in our conservation efforts.

We acknowledge our presence on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg and in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, and the lands of the Rice Lake Purchase (Treaty #20). These lands are the traditional territories of the Hiawatha, Curve Lake, Alderville, and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First

Nations. We recognize and deeply appreciate their original, historic, and modern connection to this land. We offer gratitude to First Nations for their care of, and teachings about, the earth and our relationship to it. BCWA acknowledges these teachings through our actions and respect for the land we aim to protect and conserve.

BCWA is committed to respectful engagement, the ethical inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge where offered, and supporting processes grounded in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). We recognize that the Duty to Consult is a legal obligation of the Crown and support meaningful consultation and efforts toward obtaining the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of Indigenous Nations on matters affecting their rights, interests, lands, and waters. We are committed to building a strong and respectful relationship with First Nations and will continue to support their interests and rights through ongoing dialogue, presence, and partnership.



THE BAXTER CREEK WATERSHED

The Baxter Creek watershed is a 22,600 acre, 92 square kilometre area of land that drains across four municipalities, from the Oak Ridges Moraine in the west to the Otonabee River in the east, through Cavan-Monaghan and Otonabee South Monaghan, with source water in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Northumberland County. The watershed is unique with significant headwater woodlands, cold water trout creeks, significant wetlands, large rural agricultural base with a growing urban settlement area that is dependent on groundwater for the municipal drinking water system. The Baxter Creek Watershed, like the rest of our planet, is undergoing significant change. The Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance is a local nonprofit, environmental non-government organization dedicated to the health of the Baxter Creek watershed that over 1,600 people call home.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

We are committed to rigorous scientific methodology, transparent data sharing, and decisions informed by evidence rather than ideology.



FIRST NATIONS PARTNERSHIPS AND RECONCILIATION

We recognize First Nations peoples as original stewards of these lands from time immemorial. We commit to authentic partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared vision, and genuine consent. We value Indigenous knowledge to inform our watershed activities.

We view reconciliation as central to environmental conservation.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

We believe that environmental stewardship is strongest when built on authentic relationships with community organizations, First Nations, academic institutions, and government agencies. Our work is community-based and grassroots, relying on residents and First Nation community members and right holders who bring passion and expertise to our projects.



LEARNING ORGANIZATION

As a learning organization, we attract, retain, and develop top talent, enabling us to provide program excellence and leadership to our members. We embrace a culture of continuous

learning and development. We encourage a growth mindset, supporting peer learning to create shared knowledge, skills, and capacity.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We strive for excellence in science, technology, and education. We view environmental education as essential to developing a new generation of watershed stewards.



SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

We are committed to ecological restoration and protection of natural and cultural heritage, recognizing our responsibility to protect ecosystem integrity for future generations.



TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY

We are accountable for all that we do, and we act in an ethical and honest way, upholding the trust of our members. We are transparent in our communications, operations, data management, financial reporting and in measuring our impact.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are results-driven and fiscally responsible, balancing growth and financial strength. We are resourceful, efficient, and we recognize that responsible stewardship of our member assets is critical to our long-term organizational success.

SuccessMap™ Planning & Engagement Process

The SuccessMap™ Sustainability House™ was utilized in the BCWA strategic planning process in order to generate an organizational roadmap that leads to continued success and long-term sustainability.

BCWA staff, Board, and stakeholders participated in a comprehensive and informative strategic planning process with an external consultant partner (SuccessMap™ Consulting Group). The strategic planning process included the following key steps:

1

CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEW PROCESS

SuccessMap™ Consulting Group completed 10 in-depth, confidential interviews with BCWA members, past board members, and external community partners.

2

DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS

Data from interview transcripts was coded and analyzed by SuccessMap consultants.

3

EMERGING THEMES REPORT

An Emerging Themes Report was shared with the Board of Directors.

4

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Two in-depth strategic planning sessions were facilitated with the BCWA Board of Directors.

5

REVIEW BY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The final draft strategic plan was reviewed by past board members and community partners.

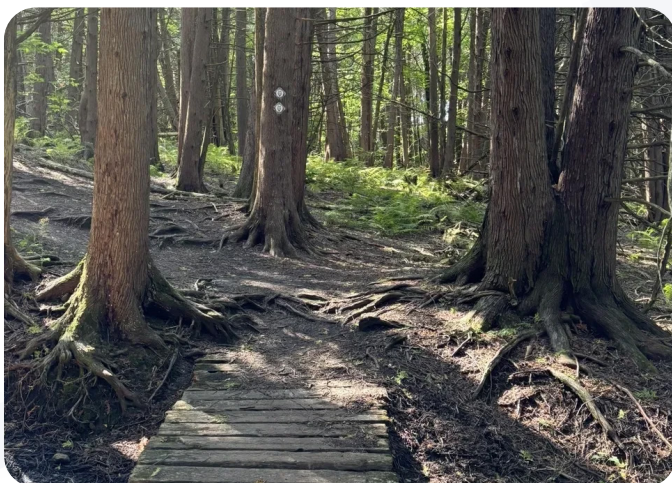


Overarching Goals

Grow and Professionalize
Educational Programming
Enablers:



**1 GROW VOLUNTEER
AND PROFESSIONAL
STAFF, OPERATIONS,
AND SERVICES**

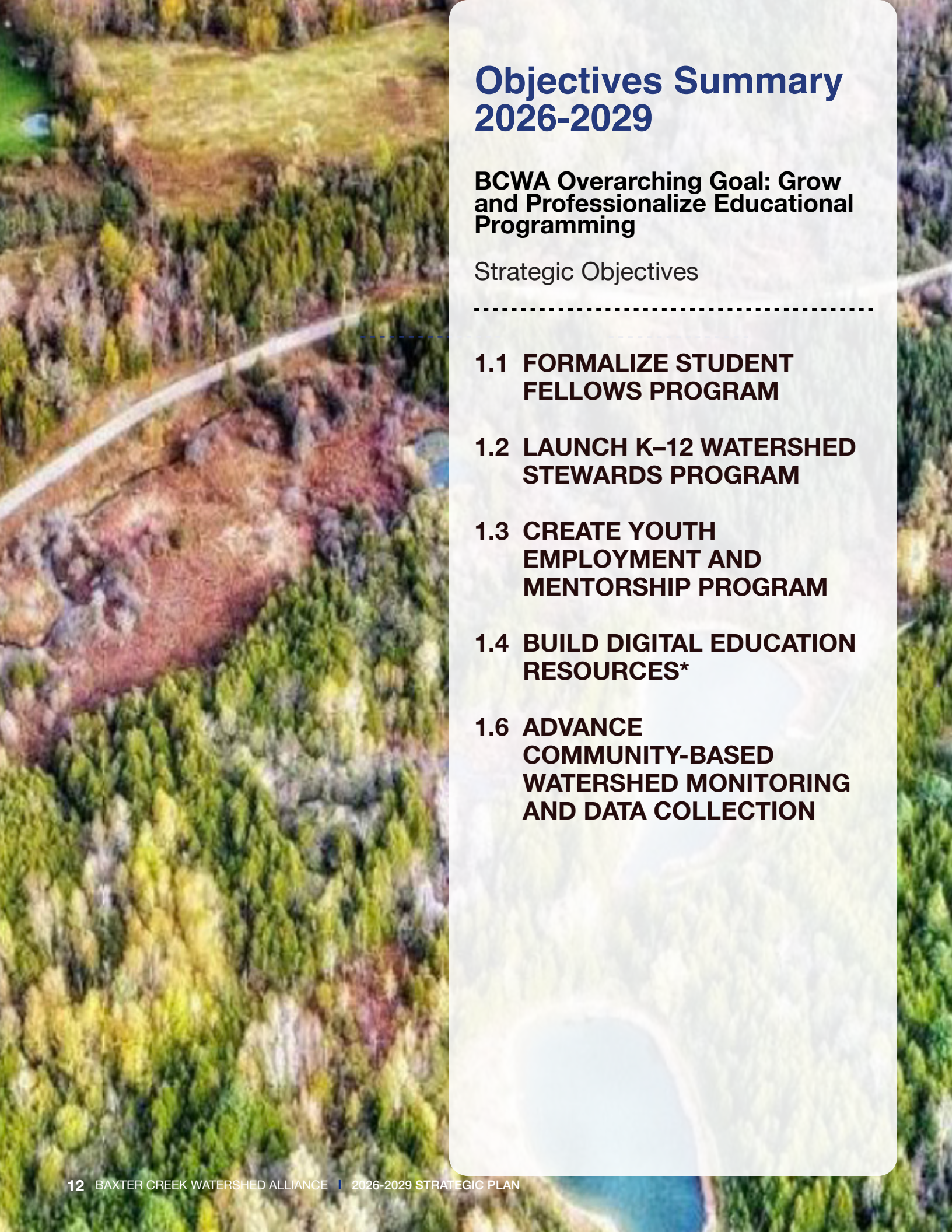


**2 STRENGTHEN
FIRST NATIONS
PARTNERSHIPS**



**3 DIVERSIFY
REVENUE
STRATEGY**





Objectives Summary 2026-2029

BCWA Overarching Goal: Grow and Professionalize Educational Programming

Strategic Objectives

1.1 FORMALIZE STUDENT FELLOWS PROGRAM

1.2 LAUNCH K-12 WATERSHED STEWARDS PROGRAM

1.3 CREATE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

1.4 BUILD DIGITAL EDUCATION RESOURCES*

1.6 ADVANCE COMMUNITY-BASED WATERSHED MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION



Measuring Results after the First Year

- 3-year funding secured for core operations
- 105-acre ecological learning hub planning underway with First Nations partners
- K-12 Watershed Stewards pilot reaching 150–200 students
- 3–5 flagship projects launched with measurable outcomes
- Charitable status obtained
- 2–3 GIS services projects completed
- Community brand awareness increased to 20–25% (from 10%)
- 150–180 newsletter subscribers (from 140)
- First Nations partnership agreements finalized with 2 First Nations





Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance



Millbrook, ON, Canada
baxtercreekwatershed@gmail.com
baxtercreekwatershed.org