



We made a
splash in 2021!

OUR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Water Rangers' HQ is located in Val-des-Monts, Quebec and Ottawa, Ontario on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People.





2021 in a nutshell

Let's face it- as an organization, and as individuals, we've been hit by wave after wave over the past two years. While 2020 felt a lot like hanging on to a life raft, 2021 was different. The waves kept coming, but this time, we knew how to surf (mostly!).

One of the things that made 2021 so great was Gabi joining the team. She's helped take Water Rangers to a whole new level, and we couldn't be happier she decided to take on the role of Director one year ago! We also hired Luke as our education and store coordinator and Will as his assistant. Running a store is a lot of work, but these two make it look easy! Thanks to them, we were able to distribute hundreds of testkits in 2021 and grow our impact across Canada and beyond. Speaking of our store, we also revamped almost all of our testkits. This was made possible thanks to feedback from our community. We look forward to adding new features in 2022 to keep growing our army of water testers.

We also "put ourselves out there" in whole new ways in 2021, including contributing to national work through Our Living Waters' Community Water Collaborative and as part of the Smart Great Lakes Initiative, amongst other 'bigger picture' initiatives. We're making sure that communities have a voice in making decisions for their local waterbodies.

Other highlights include our [brand new promo video](#), created by Graham Perry, and [the feature in The Narwhal](#) on our partner, Skeena Knowledge Trust, talking about their impact using our testkits.

Last, we ran our first end-of-year donation campaign, and raised almost \$5,000! Thank you to all our supporters, partners, funders, and water testers. We're excited to make an even bigger wave in 2022!

Message from our co-directors



Reflecting on this year is a combination of exuberance and sadness. It was an exciting one, where Gabi joined the team as a co-director. Even though we only got to meet in person a few times, it has been an absolute pleasure. Gabi, Laura, Emelia, and Luke have taken so much responsibility off my plate, it's given me a little bit of space to do some of the creative work I've been aching to do. Because of their efforts, our impact, supporting water testers across Canada and beyond, doubled in 2021! We truly have the dream team right now, and even though pushing ourselves to do better every day is hard, it's a pleasure to work with the people on this team and in this community!

All this change came after a hard time for me personally-- my father (and the inspiration for Water Rangers) sadly passed away at the end of 2020. Combined with a pandemic, supply shortages, and managing a team remotely, we've had to be flexible, creative, and kind, as we reshaped everything. It's been an amazing journey. I'm so thankful for all we've accomplished this past year and know 2022 will be even better!

Kat Kavanagh

Founder and Executive Director

My one year anniversary with Water Rangers is a symbolic date, coinciding with the new year. It's a moment to take stock, to learn, to make new and better plans, but also to be proud. We are excited to present our 2021 program work and organizational accomplishments.

Everything we do is towards ensuring that communities have the tools to understand and care for their local waterways. I marvel at how our small team was able to pull off major successes and overcome unprecedented challenges while connected only by screens during an endless pandemic. The Water Rangers team, from seasoned staff to summer students, grew into their roles and responsibilities, created and nurtured partnerships, and made names for themselves in a network that has been tasked with leading water work in Canada.

Their commitment to learning more about what we can do toward Truth and Reconciliation, their continuous celebration of our community and volunteers, and their commitment to and respect for each other is what makes this growing organization so wonderful. I can't wait for 2022 has in store for Water Rangers.

Gabrielle Parent-Doliner

Director





Water Rangers builds easy-to-use, affordable tools to crowd-source water quality data.

With floods and droughts becoming more regular, resilient water systems need people on the ground looking out for their health.

We connect people to science so they can help take care of our most precious resource: **water**.

Our method



Collect



Input



Share

Communities collect water quality data using our easy-to-use testkits (no lab required!).

waterrangers.ca/testkits

Input data onto our open data platform, via field apps (even offline), customized and quality-checked.

app.waterrangers.ca

Share data with communities, decision-makers, scientists, and other data platforms.

waterrangers.ca/share

Impact to date

200,000+

Water datapoints

9,000+

people trained in water monitoring

4,500+

waterbodies monitored

2,300+

water quality testkits distributed

20 countries

share data on our platform

170 groups

use our platform to manage
and share data

People protect what they love.

Our impact comes not just from collecting data, but also how it encourages action. Our volunteers:

83%

Taught others how to test the water

82%

Spent more time in nature

91%

Spoke to others about protecting the environment

Based on survey results 2021. Part of research on nature connectedness and personal values.



Getting social in 2021

Our message is clear: communities care about their waterways. We share stories and encourage our volunteers on social media and it makes our day to see you out on the water!

[Read our Fall highlights here](#)

149,000

Pageviews on our website

23

Blog posts + tons of new content & videos

320,300

Reach on social media
Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

700+

New followers
across all platforms

↑43%

Increased reach
compared to 2020



Testkits!

New testkits launched!

This was a big year for our online store. Not only did we launch the Education Testkit designed for classrooms (and curated by Luke and Cassidy!), but we also redesigned two of our existing kits. Now, the Freshwater Explorer Testkit comes as a backpack, while our Compact Testkit comes with a nifty carrying strap. All our testkits allow our partners to add their logos, as we love when they take ownership of their monitoring programs! We also designed brand new boxes for the Compact Kits, reducing our waste.



Testkits!



“My students were so excited when our secretary delivered the package to the class they wanted me to open it immediately. They were amazed, as was I, at the amount of materials that were in the backpack!”

- Kimberly

Belleisle Regional High School
New Brunswick

Testkits!

Behind the scenes at the Water Rangers warehouse

Our store helps us cover our overhead costs and is a big reason why we're able to support so many water testing groups. Our team lovingly assembles each and every testkit by hand! Many hours are spent at the Water Rangers warehouse, and nobody is spared from the "grunt work"- not even our canine friends. We hope you love our kits just as much as we do.



Featured collaborator

Meet our collaborator in water quality data:

DataStream

At the beginning of 2021, we teamed up with the Gordon Foundation's new Great Lakes DataStream. Water Rangers and DataStream share a commitment to supporting community-based organizations in their efforts to monitor and protect their local waterways. **Better data means better decisions.** [You can read about it here.](#)

Thank you, DataStream, for your collaboration this year. It has been an absolute joy to strengthen each other's work and we can't wait for our bigger and bolder plans for 2022!

24

Groups connecting their datasets through our systems (automatically!)

5,000+

Datapoints shared



Building our resilience!

The pandemic has exposed weak spots for many organizations, including ours! Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilience program, we did a lot of internal work this year: helping us set up systems to support our growing community, transitioning to remote working, and improving our ways of keeping track of our progress. You may have noticed new ways to get in touch with us, new features on the website, and so much more.

One of our biggest projects was to develop new ways to maintain and grow sustainably. We developed our [Ambassadors program](#), which allows us to share profits from testkit sales with our partners (making the whole community more resilient!). We also delved into other ways to be less reliant on grants.

We want to be around for the long term, and this work will continue in 2022.

[Read more about our resilient lessons](#)

Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Highlights from our growing community



Making a splash in Saskatchewan!

This year marked the inauguration of our [five-year-long NSERC Alliance project](#) with the [University of Regina's Finlay Lab](#). Data will help researchers at the University of Regina work with us to improve water quality science tools. Thank you to Dr. Kerri Finlay, Erin, Keerthi, and everyone at the University for their hard work this past year!

This August, a science camp for Indigenous youth was held at the Treaty 4 Governance Centre in Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan. This camp was a shared partnership between First Nations University of Canada, University of Regina's Faculty of Science, FHQTC (File Hills Qu'appelle Tribal Council), and IPHRC (Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre) and they used our water quality testkits as a tool to discuss two-eyed seeing. [Read more here!](#)

50+

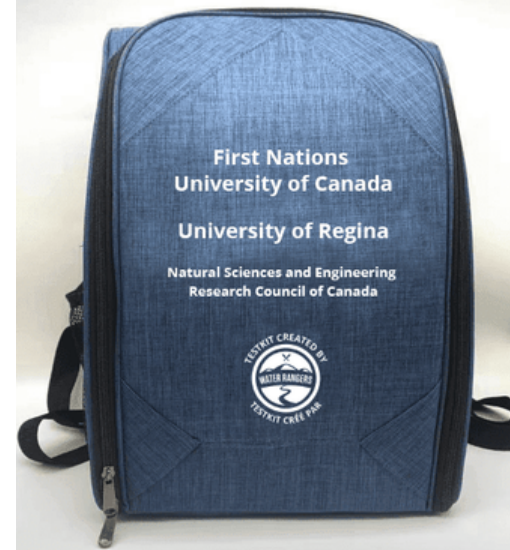
Volunteers

40+

Lakes monitored

600+

Water quality observations



University of Regina





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They come up to me and ask what I'm doing, if the water is safe, and if they can be swimming. And I have to answer that I don't know, but that I'm gathering some of the information so they will know.

Joni Darke, Saskatchewan tester

- Quoted in Krista Baliko's article for [*Discourse Magazine*](#)





Lake Erie Guardians 2021

The Lake Erie Guardians program was originally supposed to have 40 spots. After we received over 300 applications, though, we expanded the program to include 57 testkits and more than 400 participants in total!

3,636

Water quality datapoints at 137 locations

481

Challenge participants water testing, cleaning shorelines, and planting

2,695m²

Shoreline & wetland restored

457

Trees & shrubs planted

In the news

[Water Canada](#), [CTV News](#), [Southpoint Sun](#), [Windsor Star](#), [Great Lakes Observing System](#), [Radio Canada](#)



Thank you to our Lake Erie Guardian partners!

The Lake Erie Guardians program was delivered in partnership with Canadian Freshwater Alliance. Special thanks to Raj Gill for all her hard work on the program- we love working with you!

This program was made possible by the Government of Ontario's Great Lakes Local Action Fund. Thank you for all your support.

Thanks as well to ReForest London and the Essex Region Conservation Authority, who helped support the Guardians' tree planting activities. Together, we planted over 450 trees and shrubs in October.

Finally, a big thank you to DataStream, Niagara Coastal Community Collaborative, Pelee Wings, and so many others.





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Being part of the Lake Erie Guardians gave me the chance to connect with water bodies around me, a reason to keep coming back, and an appreciation for the access to nature that I have living in Southwestern Ontario. Seeing the water temperature change, measuring the amount of oxygen, and monitoring other parameters felt like I was checking in on Lake Erie to see if it was doing okay- and now whenever I walk or drive by a body of water, I wonder how it's doing. I'm so appreciative for this experience and it completely changed how I look at the environment around me!

Morena McDonald, Lake Erie Guardian



Promoting science education!

Last year, we launched a new educational program to get youth passionate about helping water bodies. We've connected with classrooms, camps, and educational groups all over the country. From first to twelfth grade, the students are always keen to learn what they can do, like water quality testing, to help protect the waterbodies they love! We can't wait to see where 2022 takes us!

5,250+

Youth trained, including 2,000 Indigenous youth

350+

Water testkits distributed

145+

Educators participated in the program (so far!)

88%

Students increased their interest in STEM



We acknowledge the support of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

Nous remercions le Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada (CRSNG) de son soutien.

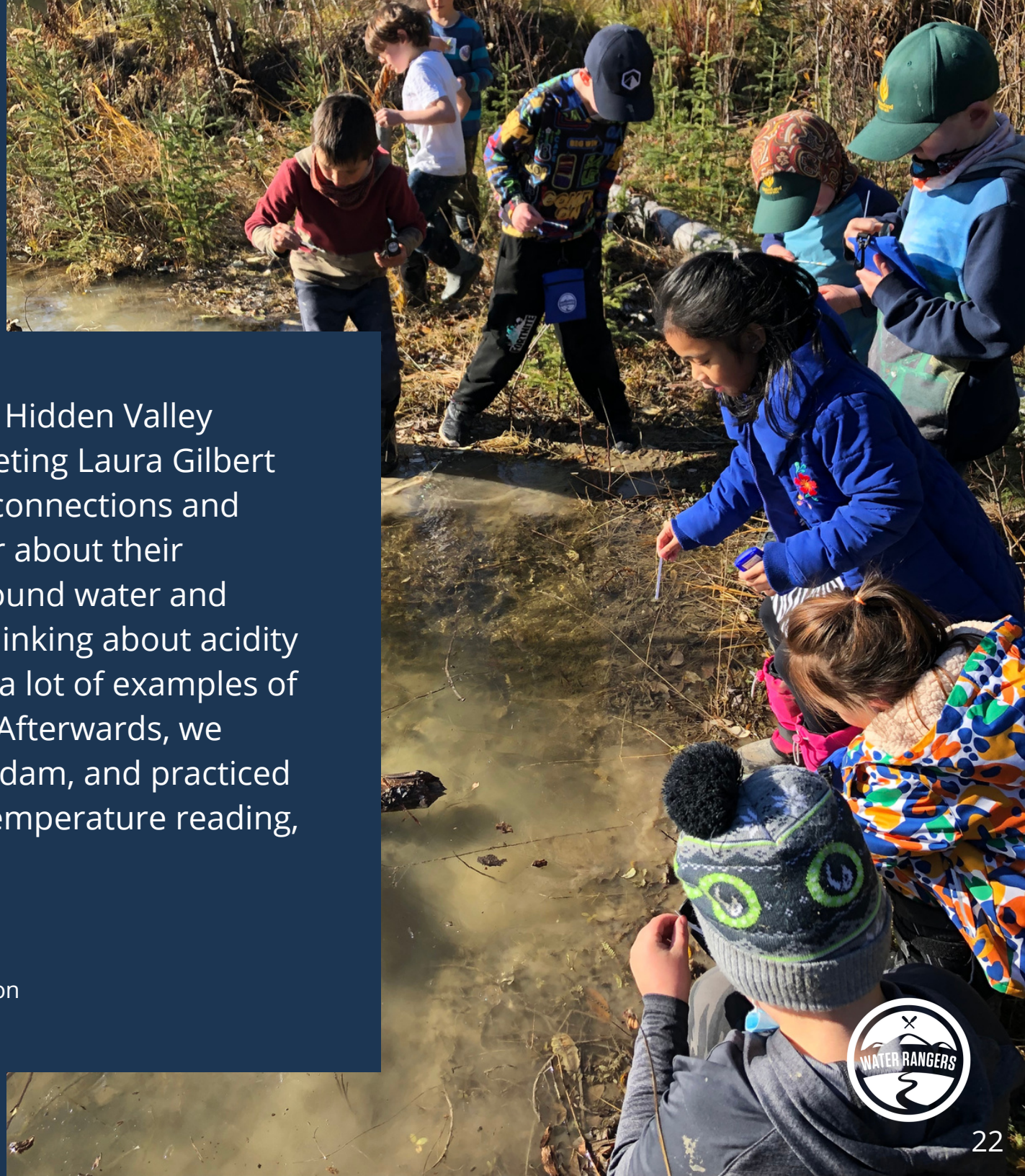


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“The Grade 1/2 students at Hidden Valley School were so excited meeting Laura Gilbert over Zoom and had many connections and questions to share with her about their knowledge and interest around water and water quality. She got us thinking about acidity and we were able to share a lot of examples of acidic and basic materials. Afterwards, we hiked out to a local beaver dam, and practiced water quality testing and temperature reading, just as Laura taught us.”

- Hillary

Hidden Valley Elementary School, Yukon





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Our camp participants really enjoyed using the testkits! So many youth reflected on how grateful and excited they were to do hands-on, interactive science and how this experience expanded their understanding of water quality and how important it is. We are excited that this year we were able to send them all home with their own compact kits so they can continue testing in their own communities. We are hosting an online meet-up soon to refresh them all on the "how to" and will continue to support & encourage them to use their kits in the new year.

- Zofia from Riparia (Montreal, QC)



Continuing long-term monitoring in Ottawa!

This year, the City of Ottawa's Community Environmental Projects Grant Program (CEPGP) helped us replenish the supplies of more than a dozen of our most dedicated testers in Ottawa. They also helped us equip a few new testers with supplies, too!

One of the testers who received re-stocking supplies was a long-time supporter, Dan. To date, Dan has uploaded more than 220 observations at more than 60 locations across Ottawa. This wouldn't be possible without the City of Ottawa's generous support!

We were also so pleased to go out with Tara (and her very knowledgeable daughter!) from the City of Ottawa to Petrie Island to show her how the testkit works in-person. While it was a hot one, we were thrilled with her enthusiasm, especially the thoughtful answers her daughter provided.

Thank you, City of Ottawa's CEPGP, for supporting local water testing!





Our lovely volunteers

There are too many to name! Whether you were new to water testing in 2021 or you've been at it for years, we're grateful to have you here. Thanks for being part of our community!



Our team!

Along with welcoming Gabi, Luke, and Will to the team in 2021, we also welcomed Sarah, Erin, and Cassidy aboard as Summer students. Graham also joined the team as our videographer! We said goodbye to Juno this year as she embarked on a new adventure. Kat, Laura, and Emelia are our long-timers, and are still as enthusiastic as ever!



From left to right. Top row: Emelia, Juno, Erin, Graham. Bottom row: Will, Kat, Gabi, Sarah, Laura, Luke, Cassidy.

Thanks!



Thanks, friends & partners!

We didn't get to visit with you all as much as we would have liked, but when we did get outside, it was all smiles :)



Thanks!



Thank you to all our funders who made our work possible!

- NSERC PromoScience
- Government of Ontario
- Ontario Trillium
- ECO Canada
- BioTalent
- Gordon Foundation
- LUSH
- Canada Summer Jobs
- Science Odyssey
- Tree Canada
- City of Ottawa
- WiL Digital
- Our board of directors
- + our generous individual donors!

Let's make
2022 the best
year for water!

