

## way Efforts underway to protect threatened species habitat

A collaborative effort between local ecological and environmental volunteer groups, Quinte Conservation and Watersheds Canada is set to roll out later this summer to alert the public of declining habitat for a threatened species found in local waterways.

In partnership with Quinte Conservation, Friends of Wellers Bay, the West Lake Community Association, volunteers on East Lake, and the County Sustainability Group, Watersheds Canada is announcing the development and implementation of a Pugnose Shiner habitat enhancement project.

The Pugnose Shiner is a small, slender minnow that can reach five to six centimetres in length. It is a silvery colour with pale yellow to olive-coloured markings on its back and a dark (sometimes inconspicuous) stripe along the side of the body that extends from the tail to the snout. The fins are pale and without pigmentation. This species has large eyes and a very small, upturned mouth.

According to the Ontario government's Species at Risk profile, the minnow is very similar in appearance to several other species of shiners that are found in Ontario and have a "Threatened" designation which means the species lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered, but is likely to become endangered if

steps are not taken to address factors threatening it.

The two-year education and action project will help shoreline property owners in the Quinte watershed protect the last remaining habitats of the Pugnose Shiner.

"It is exciting to see multiple partners and programs coming together to help restore critical habitat for the Pugnose Shiner. The communities are making a difference through their stewardship actions," said Melissa Dakers, Lake Stewardship Coordinator for Watersheds Canada.

Generously funded by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk, the Pugnose Shiner Landowner Engagement and Shoreline Habitat Restoration Project will provide many shoreline property owners in the Quinte watershed with: Education and stewardship materials including informative videos; Shoreline restorations using native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers through the Natural Edge program; Property-specific and lake-level stewardship reports through the Love Your Lake Program; and Invasive aquatic vegetation surveys conducted by Quinte Conservation.

The Shiner is also found in a few areas in southwestern Ontario and the St.

Lawrence River. It is extremely vulnerable to declining habitat quality. As such, this project will focus on landowner engagement and action to help enhance and restore local Pugnose Shiner populations and habitat quality.

"Much of our waterfront is in private ownership and these owners are the front-line caretakers of their lake. This program not only makes recommendations to landowners, but more importantly acknowledges the positive work they are already doing. The results of the 'Love Your Lake Program' will help guide stewardship efforts, available grant programs, and future studies on the lakes - all geared towards preserving and enhancing the health of our local lakes," added Maya Navrot, Outreach and Stewardship Coordinator for Quinte Conservation.

Watersheds Canada is a registered Canadian charity committed to providing programs to communities across the country to engage and help individuals enhance and protect the health of their lakes and rivers. Since 2002, they have worked with grassroots organizations to deliver freshwater stewardship programming, shoreline naturalizations and assessments, and in-water habitat restorations. To learn more, visit [Watersheds.ca](http://Watersheds.ca)

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