

Yellow fish popping up in Portland as sustainable drainage project kicks off



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PORTLAND, July 18, 2022 –

The village of Portland has been invaded by a new type of yellow fish – but this species is here to help.

The Yellow Fish Road project is just one aspect of a larger sustainable drainage pilot program kicking off this summer, thanks to funding from the Township of Rideau Lakes and support from the Big Rideau Lake Association and Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority. The freshly painted roadside fish are meant to remind residents that storm drains are directly connected to our local lakes, rivers and streams – and that chemicals, fertilizers and feces should be kept well away for the health of the water and the community.

This summer, staff from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) are investigating novel ways to divert and capture runoff to reduce nutrients reaching Big Rideau Lake. These nutrients – which are washed into the water system as lawn fertilizers, detergents, septic system leaks and more – can cause excessive aquatic weed growth, contribute to harmful blue-green algae blooms and reduce overall water quality.

The project's goal is to recommend the best sustainable drainage techniques and practices available to help the Township of Rideau Lakes protect water quality for the entire community.

RVCA staff will sample and monitor an urban catchment drain in the village of Portland and a rural non-agricultural drain just outside the village. Staff will also research best practices for sustainable drainage and implement some new practices this fall in an effort to reduce local runoff.

“Our hope is to implement a few demonstration sites around town to really inspire people to get involved,” said Mike Yee, co-project manager, aquatic biologist and planner with the RVCA. “We want to raise awareness among residents that a few simple actions can protect their lake for the long term.”

Many established sustainable drainage practices are easy and cost-effective for residents to embrace right now, Yee said. These include installing a rain barrel, planting a rain garden, moving downspouts to a permeable area and adding native plants to shorelines and ditches.

“If everyone does a little, we can accomplish a lot,” Yee said.

To learn more about sustainable drainage and for practical guides to implementing best practices, visit <https://www.rvca.ca/sustainable-drainage-pilot-project-portland> (/sustainable-drainage-pilot-project-portland).

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