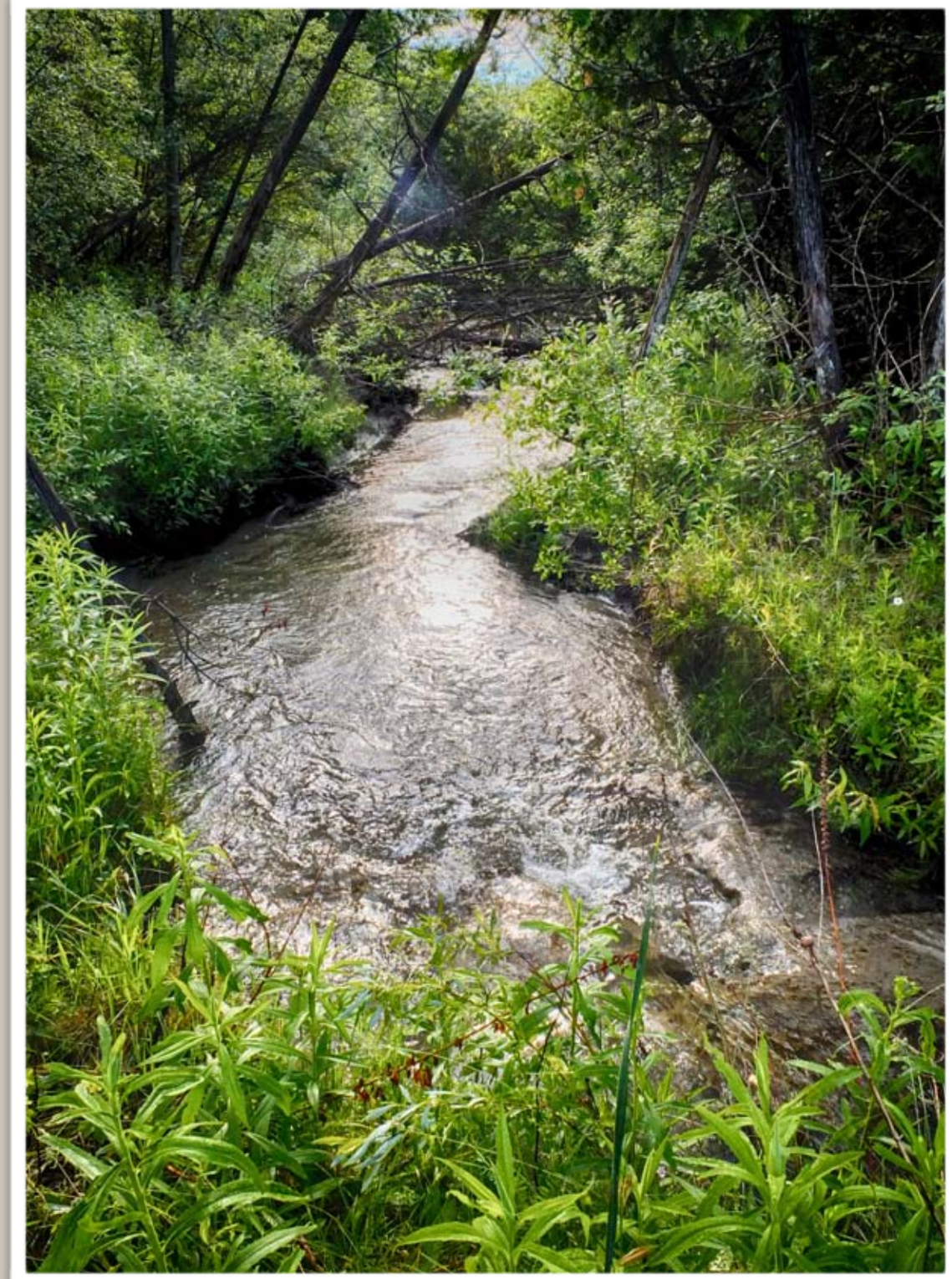
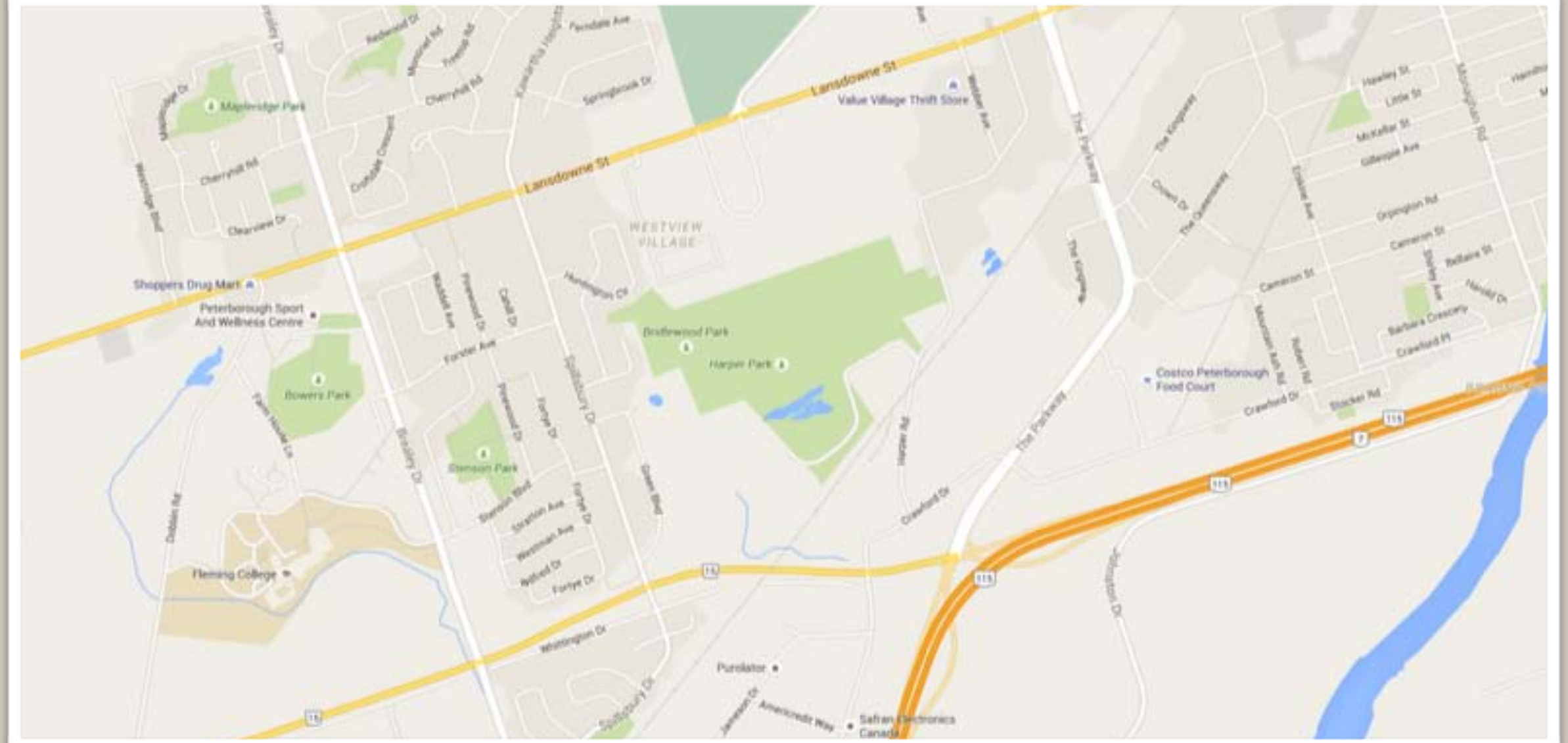
# HARPER PARK

## Stewardship in Peterborough's Urban Natural Park





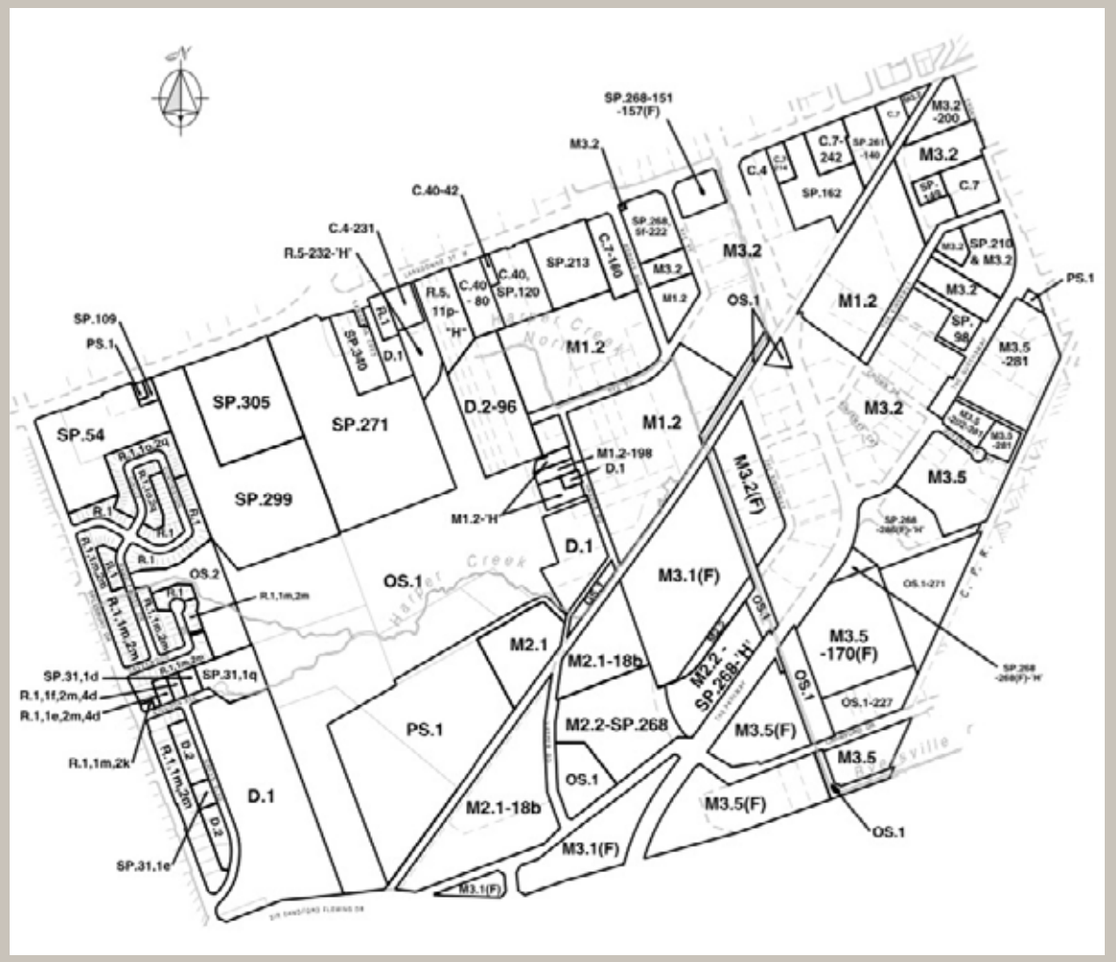

# WHERE IS HARPER PARK LOCATED?

In the southwest end of Peterborough within the east-central portion of the 581 acre Harper Creek sub-watershed. The Harper Park Natural Area also falls within the boundaries of the Lansdowne West Secondary Planning Area.

# MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL PROTECTION


- The park is zoned as a Protected Natural Area as per the City of Peterborough's Official Plan, Schedule A
  - nature based recreation
  - outdoor education
  - non-destructive research
  - horticulture
  - conservation
  - forestry
  - wildlife management
  - trails for non-motorized forms of transportation
- The natural area is ~ 148 acres, 1/4 of the watershed area.
- The wetland area of the park is designated locally significant under the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System
- The evaluated portion of the wetland is 54 acres, about 1/3 of the natural area (large portion remains unevaluated)

# PARK BOUNDARIES
# NATURAL, POLITICAL & SOCIAL




1. Natural watershed boundaries (topography) vs built drainage infrastructure (storm sewers)

2. Political & Jurisdictional boundaries: provincial (OWES), municipal (City ownership) regional (ORCA regulatory), First Nations (Treaty Rights)

3. Neighbours: Residential, commercial, light industrial

# SHARING STORIES

LIVING

# Peek inside city's natural park

## 'BioBlitz' of Harper Park catalogued unseen world of plants, animals and birds

We scanned the treetops with binoculars, cupped our ears to amplify distant calls, turned over rocks for hidden creatures and knelt down to inspect tiny plants, all the while recording every species we found. In other words, we "BioBlitzed." On June 4, eight local naturalists took part in a 12-hour marathon to catalogue as many plant and animal species as possible in Peterborough's Harper Park. Although not all of the numbers are in yet, about 250 species were tallied on this cool, June day.

**DREW MONKMAN**

OUR CHANGING SEASONS

The event – known as a BioBlitz – was organized by the Harper Park Stewardship Initiative and the Peterborough Field Naturalists. We wanted to update the lists of the area's flora and fauna as well as raise awareness of just how species-rich this little known park actually is. Public awareness is especially important in light of all the development happening in the area. So far, the species tally for the day includes 37 birds, seven dragonflies and damselflies, seven butterflies, five mammals, two amphibians, two reptiles, two fish and 180 plant species. This adds up to a grand total of almost 250 species. There will be many more names to add to the list in future inventories, as well, since we haven't yet been able to cover all sections of the park nor have we covered all of the seasons.

Harper Park is a 60 hectare (150 acre), municipally-owned protected natural area located in the southwest corner of the City. Roughly speaking, it is bordered by Westview Village condominiums and Holy Cross high school to the north, Harper Rd. to the east, Bridlewood Park to the west (itself, located along Ramblewood Dr., near Spillsbury Dr.) and Fleming Dr. to the south.

### IMPRESSIVE DIVERSITY

"I was impressed by the size of the park area and the diversity of habitats present there, including marshes, conifer swamps , shrub swamps, conifer forest, mixed forest

DREW MONKMAN photo

Kim Zippel, chair of the Harper Park Stewardship Initiative, and 14-year-old Luke Berg were part of the BioBlitz team.

CRAIG BOGDEN photos

Harper Park (top photo) is a diverse, undeveloped 150-acre green space covering much of the area south of Lansdowne St., east of Spillsbury Dr. and west of Harper Rd. Cinnamon Ferns (above) were among the 250 plant and animal species recorded by a team of eight local naturalists during a 12-hour blitz of the city-owned park.

(Lonicera oblongifolia) and the Purple Avens (Geum rivale). He and Winona were also kept busy by the dozen or so sedges present. Although some were identified visually, others were collected and identified afterwards.

Walking through the interior of Harper Park for the first time – up until the BioBlitz, I had only seen the park's edges – I was constantly impressed by the abrupt transitions in vegetation. We moved from sunlit glades and meadows, to shaded cedar forests, to conifer swamps, dominated by Tamaracks and a huge variety of ferns. I often felt like I was on a portage somewhere in Algonquin Park. However, signs of human impacts were never far.

Kim Zippel, chair of the Harper Park Stewardship Initiative, has probably spent more time exploring the area than anyone. Because of her strong connection to the park, the BioBlitz was a highly emotional experience. "I found my emotions running the gamut, from joy at the ethereal beauty of a pale green carpet of horsetails to excitement in the discovery of the rich flora and fauna of the wetlands. However, all was underscored by deep sadness when we crossed the many erosion scars, deep and ugly, created by urban stormwater runoff. Toppled trees, yawning trenches filled with foaming detergents and the foul odors of sewer water flowing into the wetlands, were a harsh reminder of a cultural tendency to value dollars over the well-being of other life forms," said Zippel.

### UNUSUAL ASH

One of the more unusual things that we encountered during the course of the day was a White Ash tree growing at the margin of an area of mixed swamp with nearby springs. The ash's trunk was horizontal to the ground, while a smaller section branched off vertically at exactly 90°. At the intersection of the bend, a portion of what looked like the original trunk remained as a snab. Mike suggested that this was possibly an indigenous trail marker tree, and that the strange bend was man-made (i.e., a sapling trained to mark a trail) and not

# BIOBLITZ JUNE 2013:
# A DAY OF EXPLORATION & LEARNING

- Dawn chorus
- Daytime Botany
- Tracking


RC Media

# CLEANING UP THE PARK

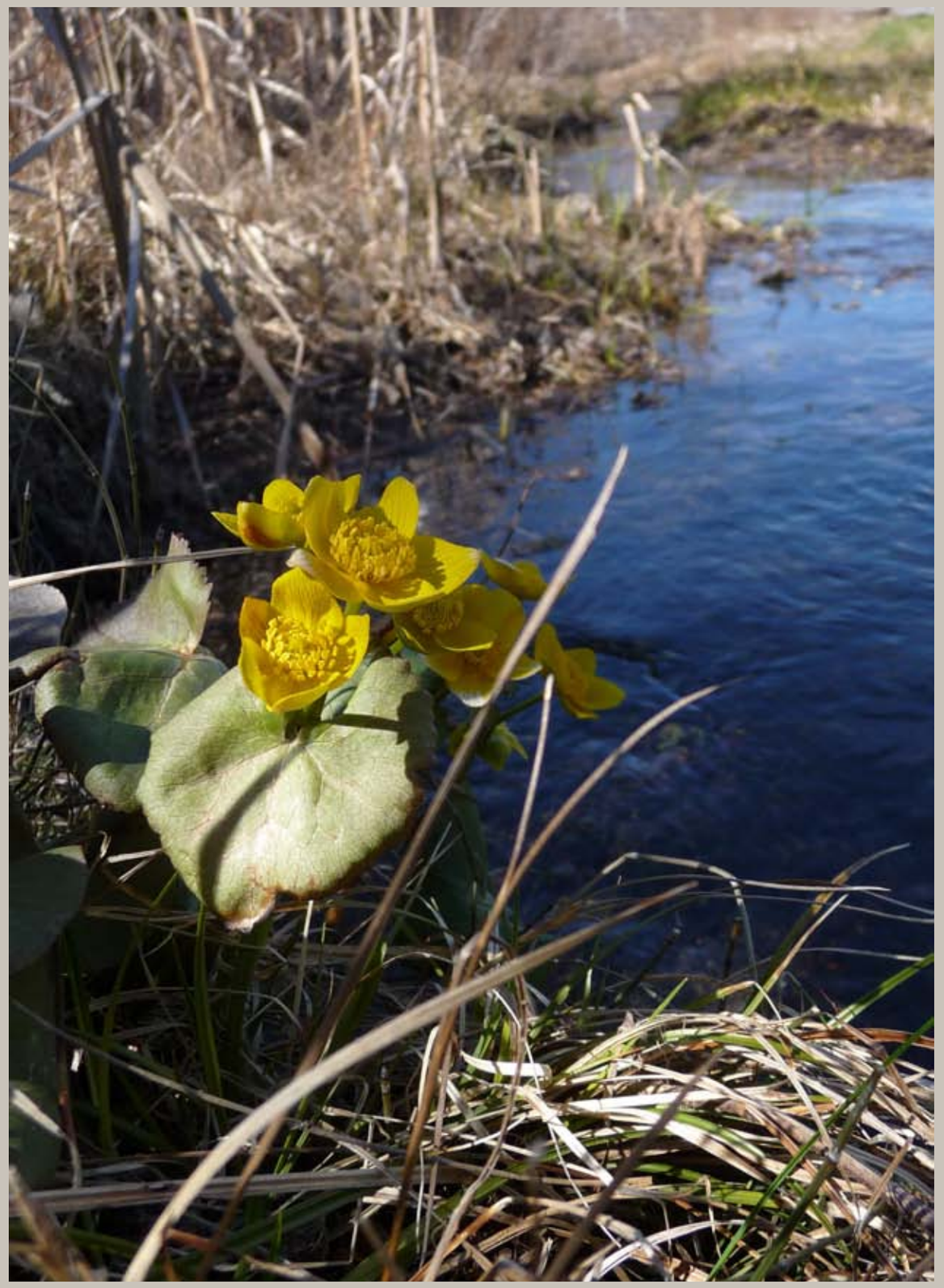
Teamwork! Making Friends! Community Benefits!


ALGONQUIN


Making a Difference
Trout Habitat Enhancement


CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION


This Harper Creek Habitat Restoration Project was completed in partnership with:
OTONABEE
Harper Park Stewardship Initiative
City of Peterborough
Funding was generously provided by:
Canada
Ontario
For more information on this restoration project or to find out how you can get involved in fish habitat enhancement efforts go to
.org/streamsteward

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# Why Should We Care?

Urban headwater, deepwater aquifer, wildlife corridor, nesting habitat for area sensitive bird species not normally found in urban areas, deer wintering area, sustains native brook trout population and is critical to the hydrology of connected wetlands