



Briefing Note

Date: November 13, 2024

Subject: ***Request for Partnership in College and Community Social Innovation Fund Grant Proposal – City of Kawartha Lakes Bird-Friendly Initiative***

Prepared for: Environmental Action Committee

Cc: City of Kawartha Lakes

Purpose of Briefing Note

The purpose of this briefing note is to formally request the recommendation of the Environmental Action Committee (EAC) to the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) to become a community partner in a College and Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF) grant proposal.

This grant is funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and organized by Professor Thom Luloff at Fleming College. By partnering in this research project, CKL will play a leading role in innovative, community-based research aimed at identifying and implementing the most effective bird-friendly strategies for urban environments.

Overview of the College and Community Social Innovation Fund Grant

The CCSIF grant program supports applied, community-based research that fosters partnerships between colleges and local organizations to address social, environmental, and economic challenges.

The grant proposal, submitted and administered through Fleming College, seeks over \$100,000 in funding, most of which will be dedicated to directly supporting research projects involving citizens in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The primary focus is to provide bird-friendly enhancements to households, promote urban conservation, and ultimately deliver practical and cost-effective recommendations for municipalities that answers questions relating to bird safety measures in an urban setting.

This project will involve students from Fleming's Frost Campus in both research and community engagement, making it an ideal blend of academic research, environmental action, and community benefit.



Overview of the Research Project

The main objective of this research project is to determine: *“What is the biggest threat to urban birds, and which bird-friendly action (window mitigation, native planting/habitat enhancement, or artificial enrichment such as bird feeders, bird baths, or bird houses) offers the best return on investment for bird safety in urban settings?”*

The goal is to provide a recommendation tool that can be adapted by municipalities across Ontario which describes the most cost-effective environmental actions that can protect urban bird populations.

Project Scope and Community Involvement

As a community-based research project, CKL citizens who wish to participate will be provided with bird-friendly enhancements such as:

- Professionally installed window collision deterrent treatments,
- Native plantings for habitat enrichment,
- Bird feeders, bird baths, and bird houses.

Each enhancement will be installed at no-cost to participants, and the success of these interventions will be monitored over a three-year period by researchers and Frost Campus students.

By partnering in this project, CKL will help foster active citizen involvement in conservation efforts, encourage sustainable urban planning, and support bird-friendly community education which aligns with our requirements to maintain a Bird-Friendly City designation.

Funding Overview and Cost Structure

The CCSIF grant proposal includes a budget request exceeding \$100,000, with the majority of funds dedicated to procuring and installing the bird-friendly enhancements, which will be subsequently monitored for efficacy, that participating citizens will retain at the end of the study.

There will be no financial commitment required from CKL in this partnership; all associated costs are covered by the grant and administered by Fleming College.



Benefits to the City of Kawartha Lakes

Enhanced Bird-Friendly Designation

- Participation in this research aligns with CKL's ongoing bird-friendly initiatives and enhances its status as a conservation-oriented municipality. Each intervention will directly benefit bird populations in urban areas and contributes to CKL's environmental objectives.

No-Cost Public Education and Awareness Efforts

- A key component of this project is public education. Through the grant, educational resources and outreach efforts will be conducted in the community, increasing awareness of conservation practices and the importance of urban biodiversity.

Support for Bird-Safe Municipal Buildings

- The research will explore the efficacy of treating windows to reduce bird collisions. As part of the project, municipal buildings identified in a recent Bird Safe Window audit may have decals installed at no cost to the municipality, serving as monitoring sites for this important bird-friendly intervention.

Community Engagement and Student Learning Opportunities

- This project involves Frost Campus students in applied conservation research, providing them with hands-on experience that will benefit CKL and foster a stronger connection between Fleming College and the local community.

Practical, Cost-Effective Conservation Recommendations

- By the project's end, the City will receive a prioritized list of bird-friendly actions based on their cost-effectiveness and impact on bird safety.
- These findings can help CKL make informed environmental policy decisions and serve as a model for other municipalities seeking similar outcomes.

Partnership Request and Commitment

We kindly ask the Environmental Action Committee to recommend the City of Kawartha Lakes to partner with us in this research initiative.

The requirements of this partnership for CKL would be defined as:

- Promoting the opportunity for CKL citizens to participate in this research project by sharing information and encouraging engagement using existing municipal communication platforms,
- Providing a letter of support on City letterhead and signing off on related partner documents, indicating the City's support for this project. This letter will be included in the final grant submission to NSERC.



Conclusion

By supporting this grant proposal, the City of Kawartha Lakes has an opportunity to advance its bird-friendly designation, enhance environmental education in the community, and contribute to meaningful conservation research without incurring any costs.

This project aligns with CKL's commitment to sustainability and community engagement and promises lasting benefits to both the City and its residents. We are excited to work together in making CKL a leader in urban bird conservation through this impactful and collaborative project.

Thank you for considering this partnership opportunity. We look forward to your support and to building a sustainable, bird-friendly future for the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thom Luloff", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Thom Luloff
Professor, Conservation Biology
Frost Campus, Fleming College