



## Blue Canoe making progress on Lake Scugog

(Lindsay, March 12, 2009) Kawartha Region Conservation Authority (KRCA) has reached over 660 property owners on Lake Scugog through the Blue Canoe project, as part of a strategy to improve lake health. With spring around the corner, the Blue Canoe team is gearing up to meet with an additional 1,300 property owners.

In a recent report to the City of Kawartha Lakes and Township of Scugog, the Blue Canoe team detailed its efforts to help households reduce or eliminate fertilizer and pesticide use, take advantage of free soil tests to help manage lawn-care, use phosphate-free soaps, have septic systems inspected, naturalize shorelines and take advantage of various other programs and incentives that will help improve the lake.

In the development of the Lake Scugog Environmental Management Plan, KRCA has identified that these types of positive actions on properties around Lake Scugog can reduce the amount of phosphorous and nitrogen entering the lake. Phosphorous and nitrogen contribute to the growth of aquatic plants and weeds, and reduce water quality. Some areas of Lake Scugog contain more than 2 and 3 times the acceptable levels established by the province.

“We’ve been hearing from an overwhelming majority of people that aquatic plants are making it difficult to enjoy the lake in summer,” said Kristie Virgoe, Kawartha Conservation Manager of Environmental Protection and Restoration. “It’s important that we meet with property owners one-on-one to talk about why this is happening and provide the tools and resources to take action.”

Based on Blue Canoe surveys conducted during the visits, 96 percent of the property owners who used fertilizers committed to reducing or eliminating their use, and 95 percent who used pesticides committed to reducing or eliminating their use. Of those who did not use phosphate-free soaps, 76 percent agreed to make the switch; 27 percent of property owners who did not have their septic system inspected in the past 3 years, agreed to do so. And, among the property owners who did not have natural shorelines, 5 percent committed to naturalizing them, while many others are considering it or are naturalizing their shorelines on their own.

“It is evident that people care about the lake and are willing to do more than they already are to help improve water quality,” said Virgoe. “Every contribution makes a difference, and together, all of these small actions add up.”

The Blue Canoe will be visiting property owners on the eastern half of Lake Scugog this summer. To pre-schedule a free, no obligation consultation, or if you missed an appointment last summer, contact Tamara Tucker at 705.328.2271 ext. 238 or email [tucker@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:tucker@kawarthaconservation.com).

***Kawartha Conservation** is a watershed based, non-profit environmental organization that provides conservation, restoration and responsible management of water, land and natural habitats through programs and services that balance human, environmental and economic needs. It is governed by the six municipalities that overlap the natural boundaries of the Kawartha Conservation watershed, which include the City of Kawartha Lakes; Township of Scugog; Township of Brock; Municipality of Clarington; Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Cavan Monaghan. [www.kawarthaconservation.com](http://www.kawarthaconservation.com)*