



Lake Scugog the focus of *Give the Lake a Break*

(Port Perry, May 4, 2009) *Give the Lake a Break*, held on May 1 and 2 in Port Perry, celebrated and explored ways to protect Lake Scugog through activities, presentations, booths and displays aimed at all ages.

“Lake Scugog is an important part of life in the Township of Scugog. Its beauty and abundance contribute to local tourism, recreation, fishing and of course our quality of life,” said Scugog Mayor Marilyn Pearce. “The lake also has value as a part of our natural environment. Its unique habitats support many fish, birds and a variety of wetland species.”

On the first day of the event, over 240 students in grades 1 to 8 from local schools learned about the importance of Lake Scugog. Among the various activities, the students observed aquatic insects in basins of pond water, used a model to see how pollution can enter and move through groundwater, and explored the services wetlands provide by comparing them to everyday items such as sponges and filters. The activities were run by Well Wise, Nonquon Environmental Education Centre and Kawartha Conservation.

In the evening, the Muskoka Wildlife Centre brought in several native, wild animals, including a porcupine, a bull frog, a skunk, a barn owl and a black rat snake. People in the audience were able to come up and touch these animals as they learned about their lives and habitats.

The second day featured presenters who focused on various topics that included the Lake Scugog Environmental Management Plan, funding incentives for protecting Lake Scugog, invasive species, greening our urban spaces and the permitting process for projects near water. More than 20 booths and displays also showcased local environmental programs, products and services.

Dave Pridham, Kawartha Conservation Manager, Environmental and Technical Services, explained during his presentation that the research Kawartha Conservation has been conducting on Lake Scugog is being used to develop a comprehensive strategy for the Lake Scugog Environmental Management Plan (LSEMP). The community will be able to review and comment on the plan later in the year.

During a panel discussion on funding incentives, Kristie Virgoe, Kawartha Conservation Manager, Environmental Protection and Restoration, talked about the programs Kawartha Conservation developed using preliminary studies from the LSEMP to begin work on reducing the amount of pollutants entering the lake. She explained how the Scugog WATER Fund provides money for projects such as erosion prevention, septic system upgrades, manure storage and other agricultural beneficial management practices. She also explained how the Shoreline Naturalization Program provides funding and assistance for shoreline naturalization, which helps filter pollutants and protect against ice damage and erosion.

Also part of the panel, Tracey Logan from Ducks Unlimited talked about the Ontario Wetland Care program which provides technical resources and grants to rural landowners to help them maintain and enhance wetlands on their properties. Robin Brown from the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association talked about how the Environmental Farm Plan provides funding and assistance for best management practices that benefit the environment and improve agricultural conditions.

During the event, the Township of Scugog unveiled the Port Perry Downtown Waterfront Revitalization Project. The project includes an expansion of the Scugog Memorial Public Library, construction of a parking structure near the waterfront area, reconstruction of Water Street, a boardwalk and trail project, and new storm water management

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measures. The estimated cost of the project is \$10.5 million, with 2/3 of the funding being provided by the provincial and federal governments. Construction is expected to begin this fall.

Scugog Mayor Marilyn Pearce presented awards to local artists who submitted works that explored Lake Scugog. The 1st place award in the youth category went to Sammi Fracz, who is in grade 5 at Immaculate Conception Catholic School. The drawing depicted a lake polluted on one side and clean on the other, with the slogan, "It's not fake, the beautiful lake, is going green, so let's keep it clean." He received a family pass to the Muskoka Wildlife Centre. The 2nd place award, Crayola art supplies, went to Chloe Stell, who is in grade 5 at Good Shepherd Catholic School. In the all ages photo contest, a \$100 gift certificate to Frame FX for winning 1st place went to Cathy Nixon for her photograph of 5 sailboats on Lake Scugog. A pass for 2 for a sightseeing cruise from Scugog Island Cruises went to the 2nd place award winner, 10-year-old Gregory Hoogers for his photos of ice spanning Lake Scugog.

"I'm pleased to take part in an event that celebrates Lake Scugog," said Larry O'Connor, Kawartha Conservation Director. "It is truly a jewel in the Kawartha region watershed."

Give the Lake a Break is supported by Kawartha Conservation, the Township of Scugog, Durham Region and the City of Kawartha Lakes.



1st place winner in the youth category, Sammi Fracz, grade 5, Immaculate Conception Catholic School



1st place winner in the all ages photo category, Cathy Nixon



Getting a close up view of a skunk during "Speaking of Wildlife"



Some of the environmental programs, products and services featured in the Marketplace