

For Information

---

DATE: August 18, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **2009 PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL UPDATE**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Environment, Transportation  
and Planning Services  
Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services

---

**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council of the outcomes of the 2009 Peel Children's Water Festival. This report provides details on the 2009 festival and the plans underway for the 2010 festival.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The 2009 Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF) marks the fourteenth anniversary of the annual festival with more than 65,000 Peel students visiting since its inception in 1996.
- More than 9,202 people (3,690 elementary students; 698 teachers and parent chaperones; 1,172 volunteers and approximately 3,642 Family Fun Day attendees) participated in the 2009 water festival.
- The theme for the 2009 water festival was "When it Rains, it Pours – Climate Change".
- The festival boasts more than 50 interactive activities that focus on environmental conservation and stewardship messages and highlight the festival theme.
- The Family Fun Day Charity BBQ raised a record amount of \$3,947 for the United Way of Peel Region.

**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

The 2009 Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF) was held between May 21 and May 27, 2009 (excluding Sunday, May 24) at the Heart Lake Conservation Area in Brampton. The PCWF is an annual, six-day environmental education event, which provides learning opportunities to students in grades two through five during the weekday event, as well as to all Peel residents at the Family Fun Day event. Using more than 50 practical and interactive activities, participants are exposed to important environmental messages related to the protection and stewardship of water resources.

The 2009 PCWF event marks the fourteenth anniversary of the festival, with more than 65,000 Peel students having attended the event since its inception in 1996. The planning and execution of the PCWF is achieved through the collaborative efforts of many external partners along with the Region of Peel's Health Services, Corporate Services and Environment, Transportation and Planning Services departments. In 2009, the theme

## 2009 PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL UPDATE

"When it Rains, it Pours – Climate Change" highlighted the effects of climate change on the water cycle. The climate change message also supports the Region's Strategic Plan V, specifically Goal #1 which is to "deliver citizen-focused services, Goal #2 to "protect, enhance and restore the environment" along with Goal #4 "to manage the impacts of growth on the community and Regional services".

With significant support from the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the festival boasts a local flare where visitors have an opportunity to learn more about local issues and projects undertaken by various community partners. Other groups in attendance included: Brampton Clean City, EcoCaledon, City of Brampton, Communities in Bloom, Credit Valley Conservation, Etobicoke & Mimico Creek Watersheds Coalition, Kortright Centre, Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club, Malton Environmental Stewardship, Ontario Clean Water Agency and Toronto Renewable Energy.

### 2. Outcomes of the 2009 Peel Children's Water Festival

#### a) Festival Attendance

The six day festival experienced average numbers in 2009. More than 9,202 people (3,690 elementary students; 698 teachers and parent chaperones; 1,172 volunteers and approximately 3,642 Family Fun Day attendees) participated in the 2009 water festival. Weekday attendance was on par and the Family Fun Day event continues to attract high attendance levels with over 60% of the attendees being first time visitors.

#### b) Family Fun Day

The seventh annual PCWF Family Fun Day was held on Saturday, May 23, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Over 3,642 Peel residents attended the event. Visitors had the opportunity to attend over 50 water-related educational activity centres delivered by Regional staff, partners and members of the community. In 2009, new activities inspired by the "When it Rains, it Pours – Climate Change" theme were also incorporated including: On Thin Ice, Twister, My Island is Sinking, I've Met My Match and Balancing our Earth.

Residents also enjoyed a charity barbeque, which raised a record amount of \$3,947 for the United Way of Peel Region. In addition to the barbeque, residents were treated to a wide variety of entertainment and environmental education exhibits, including Bugs without Borders, Freddy Fusion's Science Magic Show, the Izaak Walton Fly-fishing Club, TRCA's Splash Pad Grand Opening and TRCA's electrofishing demonstration. The Paddling Puppeteer show and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Trout Release,

Interesting statistics collected through the Family Fun Day survey indicate that the best form of advertising for such an event is either through the newspaper (26%), mobile signs (22%) or through word of mouth (40%) as opposed to flyers (5%) or the website (7%). Records also indicate that even after 14 years, 40% of the residents return each year and approximately 60% of residents are newcomers. From a geographical perspective 63% of residents attended from Brampton, 26% attended from Mississauga, 1% from Caledon and 10% from other areas.

## 2009 PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL UPDATE

### c) **Volunteers**

Approximately 1,172 volunteers contributed 9,962 hours of water festival volunteer work in 2009. The majority of the volunteers (approximately 619) consisted of secondary school students within Peel Region, many of whom were also visitors of the festival as children. Given the long history of the festival over a generation of children have been educated on the importance of water and many are interested in giving back through volunteering and peer teaching at the event. By adopting a peer-mentorship format of delivering the festival's messages, student volunteers are also able to develop valuable interpersonal and leadership skills. This year, six secondary schools participated in the festival, including St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Augustine, St. Edmund Campion, St. Marguerite d'Youville, Mayfield, and St. Paul's.

As part of volunteer recognition, the Commissioners of Health Services and Environment, Transportation and Planning Services will be inviting the Peel District and Dufferin Catholic School representatives to receive plaques which will formally recognize the importance of their participation and support to the successful presentation of the 2009 Peel Children's Water Festival.

### 3. **Future Direction of the Peel Children's Water Festival**

The 2010 PCWF will continue to build on the accomplishments of past festivals by providing a unique environmental educational opportunity for the young citizens of Peel. With valuable feedback gained from all stakeholders, preparations are underway for the 2010 PCWF.

The theme for the 2010 PCWF will be determined in the following months and will be related to the environmental impacts of our water supply and wastewater flows. A number of new activities will be designed to focus on the importance of protecting water sources and to ensure safe water today and in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2009 PCWF has continued to meet the expectations set by past festivals. With excellent Family Fun Day attendance, positive media coverage, significant volunteer support, and interactive activities, the 2009 festival demonstrated the Region of Peel's commitment to the promotion of environmental protection and stewardship initiatives through education. Recognized as a leader among water festivals in Ontario, the PCWF will strive to maintain its successes by continually searching for new and innovative approaches to deliver environmental messages related to the health benefits, protection and stewardship of water resources with a community focus.

August 18, 2009

ETP-A1 - 4 -

**2009 PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL UPDATE**



*per* Dan Labrecque  
Commissioner of Environment,  
Transportation and Planning Services



Janette Smith  
Commissioner of Health Services

**Approved for Submission:**



*for* \_\_\_\_\_  
D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact  
Johann Manente at extension 3297 or via email at [johann.manente@peelregion.ca](mailto:johann.manente@peelregion.ca)*

*Authored By: Kristina Hatton*

c. Legislative Services