

For Information

DATE: July 19, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **2010 PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL UPDATE**
 FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works  
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## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council of the outcomes of the 2010 Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF). This report provides details on the 2010 festival and the plans underway for the 2011 festival.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2010 Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF) marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual festival with more than 70,000 Peel students visiting since its inception in 1996.
- More than 10,672 people (3,823 elementary students; 698 teachers and parent chaperones; 766 volunteers and approximately 5,385 Family Fun Day residents) participated in the 2010 water festival.
- The 2010 water festival highlighted the 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with the theme "Wastewater: Where does the water go after you use it?"
- The festival boasts more than 50 interactive activities that focus on environmental conservation and stewardship messages.
- The Family Fun Day Barbecue raised \$3,266 for the United Way of Peel Region.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Background

The 2010 Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF) was held between May 27 and June 2, 2010 (excluding Sunday, May 30) 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 on the Saturday Family Fun Day event. Using more than 50 practical and interactive activities, participants learn about important environmental messages related to the protection and stewardship of water resources and water and wastewater treatment.

The 2010 PCWF event marked the fifteenth anniversary of the festival, with more than 70,000 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 Health Services, Corporate Services and Public Works along with many external partners. In 2010, the 15

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year anniversary was highlighted. A new logo was designed to reflect the water festival's success and history of water-related fun. The festival website was also redesigned for easier navigation and to showcase the new logo.

In an effort to educate and create awareness with the public the theme "Wastewater: Where does the water go after you use it?" was used. Wastewater is the used, soiled water gathered from homes and businesses across the Region of Peel. The items and materials that residents and businesses dispose of through their household plumbing, directly affects the quality of the wastewater and the infrastructure needed to transport wastewater from the home to the plant for treatment.

The festival incorporates community initiatives where visitors have an opportunity to learn more about local issues and projects being undertaken by various community partners. Partners in attendance included: Brampton Clean City, City of Brampton, City of Mississauga, Credit Valley Conservation, ecoCaledon, Ecosource, Enersource, Invading Species Awareness, Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club, and Ontario Clean Water Agency.

## 2. Outcomes of the 2010 Peel Children's Water Festival

### a) Attendance

The six day festival experienced the expected numbers during the weekday and record breaking numbers on the Family Fun Day event in 2010. More than 10,672 people (3,823 elementary students; 698 teachers and parent chaperones; 766 volunteers and approximately 5,385 Family Fun Day residents) participated in the 2010 water festival. Weekday attendance was consistent with previous years and the Family Fun Day event continues to attract high attendance levels with over 55 per cent of the attendees being first time visitors.

### b) Family Fun Day

The eighth annual PCWF Family Fun Day was held on Saturday, May 29, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A record breaking 5,385 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 2010, new activities inspired by the "Wastewater: Where does the water go after you use it" theme were also incorporated including: Straight to the Lake, How Much Do We Use?, Peter the Plumber and Sewer Detectives.

To celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> annual festival a commemorative event was hosted on the Family Fun Day. A cake cutting ceremony and photo opportunity was held to recognize the anniversary. In support of the festival celebrations Regional Councillor Elaine Moore was in attendance for the event.

Residents also enjoyed a charity barbecue, which raised \$3,266 for the United Way of Peel Region. In addition to the barbecue, residents were treated to a wide variety of entertainment and educational shows, including: Bugs without Borders, Creature Quest, Freddy Fusion's Science Magic Show, Izaak Walton Fly-fishing Club, Scienstational Ssnakes, Peel Health Puppet Show, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's - Trout Release, Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Grand Opening and electro fishing demonstration.

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 (42 per cent),

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mobile signs (23 per cent) or word of mouth (20 per cent). Records also indicate that even after 15 years, 45 per cent of the residents return each year and approximately 55 per cent of residents are new comers to PCWF. From a geographical perspective, 80 per cent of participants attended from Brampton, 11 per cent from Mississauga, 1 per cent from Caledon and 8 per cent from other areas.

### c) Volunteers and Regional Staff Support

Approximately 766 volunteers and Regional employees contributed 6,128 hours of work in 2010. The majority of the volunteers (approximately 580) were 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. 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, seven secondary schools participated in the festival, including: Peel Alternative North, Gonzaga, St. Augustine, St. Edmund Campion, St. Marguerite d'Youville, Mayfield, and Fletcher's Meadow.

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

The 2011 PCWF will continue to build on the accomplishments of past festivals by providing a unique educational opportunity for the young citizens of Peel. With valuable feedback gained from all stakeholders, preparations are underway for the 2011 PCWF.

The theme for the 2011 PCWF will be determined in the coming months and will be related to the environmental health of our water supply. 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 2010 PCWF continues to meet the expectations set by past Peel water festivals. With excellent Family Fun Day attendance, positive media coverage, significant volunteer support, and high quality activities, the 2010 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 convey environmental messages related to the health benefits, protection and stewardship of water resources with a local community focus.

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