



# Tayside Times



## The Friends of the Tay Watershed Newsletter February 2012 ~ Volume 11, Issue 1

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*Friends of the Tay Watershed is a non-profit, charitable association of residents, associations and other organisations interested in the welfare of the Tay watershed, located in eastern Ontario, at the top of the Rideau watershed. We welcome your involvement in any of the Association's activities.*

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### The next ten years...water and diamonds.



At our Watershed Discovery Day this past year (see below), we celebrated our Founders. These men and women set the foundation for and guided the Friends of the Tay Watershed for its first decade. The resulting accomplishments are many and diverse. The implementation of the Tay Watershed Management Plan was the main pillar of these accomplishments and, within that, the support to watershed lake associations and the development of lake plans for improving their lake environments.

It is timely then, that the RVCA is now undertaking a new look at the Tay Watershed with a view to releasing an updated plan in 2012. The Friends have already provided perspective to this exercise and we hope that it will result in a new set of priorities for the River and the Watershed.

Our outreach and education activities have never been stronger, with new partnerships established with the Royal Bank's Blue Water program, Canadian Federation of University Women and a variety of local businesses and organizations. We will build on these. We will continue work on having the Tay recognized as a Canadian Heritage river.

So what does water and diamonds have to do with this? It is possible, that as a result of the financial turmoil that has engulfed the last of the past decade and the beginning of this one, that we humans will begin to seek out true value? Bringing back the specter of Adam Smith, is it possible that we can continue to value diamonds more highly than water? Perhaps, by the end of this decade, through the work of our great volunteers, we will help others see the true value of water and cherish it appropriately.

## We do lots of fun stuff...

### Watershed Discovery Day and its Future



On a beautiful Sunday in September, we celebrated our 11th annual Watershed Discovery Day at EcoTay in Tay Valley Township. Things got underway by recognizing and celebrating our Founders -Orion Clark, David Crowley, Carol Dillon, Cathy Hamlin, Cameron MacLeod, Lynn Preston and our founding President, David Taylor. Workshops and presentations by Diana Beresford-

Kroeger, Paul Eggington and Franz Klingender, explored the theme of Climate Change in the Watershed. We had visits from Cool Captain Climate and his puppet shows and the Earthrise Players Watershed Beings for the younger crew, as well as more than 20 exhibits and interactive displays. Despite good publicity, good weather and great features, our draw was still 150-175 people, which leads us to consider some alternate approaches. Suggestions welcome! Kudos to Michael Glover of Eco Tay and to Annie Dalton and her team and to our sponsors - RVCA, Lanark Stewardship Council, Tay Valley Township, OMYA Canada and Rivington Valley Honda.

### Paddle the Tay

On June 25th, twenty-seven 'paddlers' in 19 canoes and kayaks, from the Perth area and as far away as Ottawa, Manotick and Almonte, participated in a guided tour down the Tay Canal from Perth to Beveridges Locks. Along the way, experts from Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Parks Canada, and Agriculture Canada provided comments and explanations of the local flora and fauna, and also history - the Tay Canal is now in its 177th year. The event was organised by the Friends of the Tay Watershed, in cooperation with the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County. Thank you to Parks Canada for providing free passage through the Beveridges Locks.



### Interpretive Signs Placed on Original Tay Canal Sites

With an \$18,600 grant from Canadian Heritage Department, and considerable local resident input, commemorative plaques have now been placed in five strategic locations



on the original Tay Canal. The interpretive signs, researched and designed by Drummond/North Elmsley Township volunteers, are located beside the Port Elmsley Bridge at the original Lock Two, at the Township Hall, at the Rideau Canal Museum, and, shortly, at the Perth Wildlife Reserve overlooking the original Lock Five. A fifth Tay Canal panel and kiosk were installed on Perth's Tay Trail, beside the Beckwith Bridge Master's house. Grant funding also provided for an expansion and wider distribution of Ralph Willsey's excellent 'Tay Canal Days' video ([click here](#)).

### Water Guardian Scholarship

Our first year for the "Water Guardian Scholarship" got off with a bang! We had two excellent applicants, so the Board agreed to award two scholarships of \$500 each. Augusta Lipscombe, a graduate of St. John Catholic High School, Perth and Eli Crapper out of PDCI were our winners. Augusta is pursuing her studies in Marine Biology at Guelph while Eli is enrolled in Health Sciences at McMaster. The essays they submitted can be viewed [here](#). Watershed students planning to enter an environmental-related discipline next fall are invited to apply.



## Festival of Maples and Stewart Park Festival

We had a strong presence at both these Perth events and the weather for both could not have been more perfect. Our theme for these events was “Treasuring Our Tay” with a photo display of why the Tay and its Watershed are so important to the communities that live in or along it. We attracted many inquiries and distributed quite a few of our membership brochures as well as the Canoeing the Tay brochures. Our partners, Ducks Unlimited provided quality materials for the younger crowd including coloring books, paper games, and an amazing 3 page pamphlet listing all of the types of birds. Thanks to Debra Bellevue, Chris Stone, Colin Stephenson, David Taylor, Frank Roy, Taro Alps, Doug James, Karen Hunt, Carol and Mel Dillon, Barry Joint, Peggy Land, Joanne Sparks, Alyson Symon, as well as our PDCI students Jesse and Matt.



## We speak for the River and the Watershed...

### Town of Perth

We continue to monitor progress on the Town’s remediation efforts to reduce the pollutants being dumped into the Tay River from the Water Treatment Plant. On an annual basis, 15 metric tons of alum (aluminum sulfate) and 41 metric tons of suspended solids are released, untreated, into the river. From the latest information we have, the implementation schedule seems to have been accelerated by some two years. Of the storm water treatment measures that were part of the Wilson Street Infrastructure funding, which would have partially treated about 30% of the Town’s storm water (above Stewart Park), we have had no news.

### Treasure the Tay

Last spring, the Friends collaborated with the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to present an evening titled Treasure the Tay. The evening was a response to concerns raised about the safety of swimming in the Tay River in Perth. The Health Unit stopped testing the water for swimming 15 years ago after a series of very high ecoli counts. Six panelists representing interests in water, health, recreation and the Town discussed the issues and answered questions.

### Treasure the Tay continued...

A second meeting was held in November to discuss next steps. With support from the FoTW, the CFUW has applied for a grant to fund Tay water testing to health unit standards. These test results will be shared with visitors to Stewart Park so they may make an informed decision as to the safety of swimming in the Tay. The Friends support this collaboration as the data will also be useful in the long term understanding of Tay waters and the need for protection.

### Source Water Protection

Source Water Protection is an ambitious initiative of the provincial government to protect the sources of drinking water for municipalities. After identifying the sources of drinking water and assessing the threats of contamination to that water, the five-year program is now in the final stages of preparing policy and plans to better protect and manage water sources. The Town of Perth has the only municipal water supply in the Tay watershed. Its water supply from the Tay River has been mapped and policies to manage threats developed. The rest of the Tay watershed uses drinking water from private wells. This whole area has been defined as “highly vulnerable” because of fractured bedrock with a thin soil overlay. The Friends will continue to promote best management practices for water both in Town and rural areas.

### Tayside Estates

A developer, Lockwood Lands Corporation, has proposed a residential sub-division near the Hamlet of Glen Tay, on the south side of the Tay River, bordering on the Glen Tay Road. This property sits between the Tay River and the provincially significant wetlands along Grants Creek. The Friends of the Tay have intervened at various stages of the planning process, with a view towards ensuring that any development of this property should be handled in an environmentally sustainable way. The concern is that this section of land is particularly ecologically sensitive and should be developed only with full regard for current environmental and municipal planning regulations. We believe that this property may well be the template for future development along a corridor towards the Town of Perth and therefore should be done right.

Our main concerns with the initial plan of subdivision related to the sub-standard lots sizes proposed and the potential for ground water contamination, given the underlying fractured rock formations. We registered concerns as well about the fact that the initial site plan intruded unacceptably onto the flood plain and lacked appropriate setbacks from wetlands.

Recent indications are that the developer has listened to the various interveners in the process. The latest plans appear to have remedied most of our earlier concerns. While they are not yet perfect and while there are still some unresolved hydrogeological issues raised by RVCA concerning both water quality and quantity, there has been a significant improvement in the plans for the proposed sub-division plans.

## We work with and through our partners....

### Voices of Pike Lake

With the leadership of Kay Rogers, the folks on Pike Lake created and published a wonderful history of Pike Lake. Voices of Pike Lake is the product of a community initiative arising from the vision of members of the Pike Lake Community Association. Over forty people with diverse backgrounds and educational levels contributed to the book – which results in the great variety of stories and voices. Formal education of contributors ranges from someone who is illiterate to several with doctorates. The age of contributors ranges from mid 20's to age 90. Notwithstanding this diversity of contributors, the book remains cohesive and an excellent read. Over 300 people showed up for the festive book launch in July.

The Friends were proud to nominate Voices for an Ontario Historical Society award, particularly as the community-building aspect of the book, the bridging of settlers and newcomers sharing the lake, will make keeping Pike Lake and its watershed healthy an easier task.



### Royal Bank of Canada Funded Projects

This fall, the Friends were pleased to receive another Royal Bank of Canada grant to support our Developing Local Water Stewards program. This grant was used to provide a science program about local water to two Grade 8 classes in the Tay watershed: North Elmsley P.S. and The Stewart School in Perth. The program included visits to local water treatment plants, the sewage lagoons, and awareness of the local drinking water intake protection zones. Students studied water consumption and water billing in their schools, conducted an eco-review of water usage in which they checked school taps and toilets for leaks, graphed the results, and developed action plans for water conservation. Program instructor Patricia Larking from Nature Works Learning said, "Students learned about various aspects of water protection and feel they would be able to discuss this with family and friends." The program was highly rated by the teachers and meets the Friends' objective to help develop a new generation of water-savvy people.



### Local Water – Fact & Fiction

This summer, Perth chief librarian Elizabeth Goldman, had a timely idea to feature "water" as a special topic at the library. Books – both fact and fiction – relating to water topics were gathered for a special display, and the Friends were invited to provide a speaker for an evening session. Carol Dillon spoke about local water – facts and fiction and used common water myths as the "fiction" (Canada has lots of water so why worry) and corrected them with the "facts" (Perth has lots of water, but needs cautious use to conserve capacity in the sewage lagoons.) This new partnership with the library and its highlighting of water issues was welcomed by the Friends as part of its public awareness and education objective. For the first time, we were pleased to welcome the Library as an exhibitor at our Watershed Discovery Day.

### RVCA Sub-Watershed Plan

RVCA has just started their sub-watershed plan for the Tay River that will include 14 smaller catchment areas. They completed the Middle Rideau sub-watershed and the Jock River in 2010. All lakes in the area were sent, via email, a request to fill out an online survey that is due by January 20th to assist RVCA with their study and report. The report will highlight four key environmental indicators; forest, riparian, wetland cover, surface water quality and other monitoring programs.

The objective of the survey is to; 1. Identify/highlight specific, prioritized environmental-related issues/threats facing the lake communities, 2. List opportunities/solutions for improving local water resources management and 3. Highlight key stewardship activities that have been implemented or are being proposed on lakes. [Click here for map.](#)

## Lake News - Summer 2011



Water levels in all Eastern Ontario lakes, the Tay River and Rideau Canal were extremely low in late summer due to a lack of precipitation. We hope that this does not continue into 2012.

Bobs & Crow Lakes continued with their shoreline survey that was started in 2010. With the expertise and assistance from CSW (Centre for Sustainable Watersheds), RVCA and the many volunteers who donated their time and boats a total of 1,060 properties have been surveyed over the past two years and it is planned to complete the remaining 364 properties in 2012.

Bobs & Crow Lakes Association is also working with the Toronto Zoo on their project titled Healthy Waters, Healthy Wildlife. This project will span several years and is intended to identify, catalog and protect significant wetlands and the wildlife found around the lakes.

Over on Pike Lake, in addition to Voices of Pike Lake, the community association produced and distributed 300 copies of Keeping Pike Lake Healthy: Our Lake Stewardship Handbook to all lakeshore residents.

They passed the paddle on Otty Lake, as outgoing President (and Friends Board member) Karen Hunt handed over the chair to Robert Cosh. We wish Robert good sailing and recognize Karen's enormous contributions over the years.

The Christie Lake Association published their first Lake Stewardship Guideline, an interesting and informative document with state of the lake information as well as key issues and strategies for the lake.

## More about us... Donors and Sponsors

The Friends are fortunate indeed to have a number of generous donors who care about the work we do for the health of the Tay Watershed. Recently, for example, we have received a third annual sizable donation from Graham Beck of Little Stream Bakery in Glen Tay. The Little Stream Bakery has committed to the 1% for the Planet program, under which 1% of net revenues are donated to help create a healthy planet. We have received a third annual donation from the Royal Bank in recognition for the volunteer work that one of their staff members (Debra Bellevue) does for us. We have also received a significant "in-kind" donation for several years from Brian Donaldson of Perth Stor-N-Lock. Brian has provided the Friends with a large storage locker free of charge for all of our numerous supplies. Finally, and equally satisfying, are the number of donations we have received from a several individuals, most of whom would prefer anonymity. 🙌🙌

Thankfully our donors seem to appreciate the fact that we try to do as much as humanly possible through the use of volunteer labour, but for some projects we do need their financial help. If you would like to support us financially, you may do so on-line through our website and Canada Helps at [www.tayriver.org/documents/donations.php](http://www.tayriver.org/documents/donations.php), or by sending a cheque to us at P.O. Box 2065, 57 Foster Street, Perth, ON, K7H 3M9. We will provide tax receipts for all donations of \$10 or more.

The Friends approach various sponsors to assist us with specific projects during the year and our sponsors have stepped up generously to lend us a hand. During the past year, we have received significant grants from the RBC Blue Water fund to support our Nature Learning Projects at local Grade 8 classes. We received a large grant from Canadian Heritage to provide historic signage of the Tay Canal in Perth and in Port Elmsley, as well as funds for the Tay Canal Days video. For Watershed Discovery Day programming, we received grants from Tay Valley Township, the Stewardship Council of Lanark County, Omya, Rivington Honda and RVCA. Our thanks go out to all of these donors and sponsors for their generosity.

Please give some thought as well to adding a donation to help finance our educational program for 2012. As funding for events becomes more difficult, we are relying more and more on the generosity of our donors to fund our activities. Fortunately, we have some very generous donors who care about the work we do and we would love to expand the list. We will provide tax receipts for all donations of \$10 or more. You may also donate on-line by going to our secure on-line donation facility at Canada Helps ~ see [www.tayriver.org/documents/donations.php](http://www.tayriver.org/documents/donations.php).

## We Get Mail

The FoTW website ([www.tayriver.org](http://www.tayriver.org)) attracts a lot of attention, and we are delighted when people write to the organization. Our aim is to provide detailed information or to connect people with the experts who can answer their questions. Webmaster Colin Stephenson has been exemplary in responding to the mail with detailed and useful feedback. Recent enquiries have come from a woman who wants to bring her young sons to kayak the Tay. Another enquiry was from a university student who is writing her thesis on “the overall health of the entire Tay watershed.” And yet another enquiry came from a man seeking to purchase land along the Tay and wondered if it was prone to flooding. Colin offered to escort him to the location, but the writer replied that would be difficult as he was emailing from Dubai!

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## Financial Overview

We have just received a clean bill of health from our Auditor, John Gibb-Carsley of JS Financial Services for our 2011 Financial Statements. A heartfelt “thank you” goes out to John for completing this critical third party review of our financial affairs on a volunteer basis. In short our 2011 Income Statement tracked fairly close to the Budget approved at the AGM last January. The main differences had to do with the timing of some income and expenditures, as well as some substitutions approved by Our Board of Directors of some of our expenditures plans. Our Financial Statements have been posted on our website for full transparency purposes at [www.tayriver.org/documents/financial.php](http://www.tayriver.org/documents/financial.php). They will also be presented at the AGM on January 31st, together with the proposed Budget for 2012.

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## FoTW Membership

Now would be a very good time to renew your membership. Our memberships run for 12 months from the date purchased, but many people choose to renew at this time. If you can't find your membership card, chances are that it is time to renew. The Association counts on membership revenues to keep you informed about our activities and to cover some of the other operational expenditures. So please take a minute to fill in the [attached membership form](#) and mail it in to us at P.O. Box 2065, 57 Foster St., Perth, ON, K7H 3M9.

## Did You Know?

Did you know that you no longer have to go to Smiths Falls to have your well water tested? It will now be easier to have it tested the minimum recommended three times per year. You can now drop off your water bottles in Perth at The Office 11 Wilson St. East, Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 5:30pm (613-267-2172). They also have a quantity of sample bottles for you to use.

Did you know that the Government of Ontario has some good information for well owners available on their website ([click here](#))? They also have a Well Owner's Information Package available by emailing [wellshelpdesk@ontario.ca](mailto:wellshelpdesk@ontario.ca).

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## The Last Word

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions on anything in this newsletter, or on anything we do, please let us know:

- Email: [info@tayriver.org](mailto:info@tayriver.org)
- Webform: [Contact Us](#)
- Telephone: 264-0680, 267-1026
- Regular Mail:
  - Friends of the Tay Watershed
  - P.O. Box 2065
  - 57 Foster Street, Perth, ON
  - K7H 3M9

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## Attachment

- [Membership Form](#)



## ***FRIENDS of the TAY WATERSHED*** ***Membership Form***

**I / we would like to become a member of the Friends of the Tay Watershed, or renew the membership for the next 12 months.**

*(Please check one)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual Membership	\$ 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership	\$ 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization Membership	\$ 25
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining Corporate Membership	\$200

**My / our address is:** *(For renewals, if no change to address, telephone & e-mail, just enter your name below.)*

	<b>Permanent / Winter Address</b>	<b>Summer Address (if different)</b>
Name(s)		
Street Address		
Municipality		
Province (State)		
Postal (Zip) Code		
Telephone		
Email		

**Preferences:** *(please check as appropriate)*

<b>I / we prefer to receive information:</b>	By email / website <i>(preferred method to save money and trees)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	By regular mail	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I / we would like to volunteer to help the "Friends" in these capacities:</b>	Staffing information booths at festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Environmental or Educational Projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Communication / writing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fund raising	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Interested observer / supporter only	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other <i>(please describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**I / we have provided an addition contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ .**

**Please mail completed membership form and associated cheque to:**

**Friends of the Tay Watershed  
P.O. Box 2065  
57 Foster Street  
Perth, ON  
K7H 3M9**