



Friends of the Tay Watershed Association

PRESS RELEASE

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Treasure the Tay – Is it safe for swimming?

The Friends of the Tay Watershed in collaboration with the Environment Committee of the Canadian Federation of University Women (Perth) are pleased to announce that they have received a funding grant from the Perth and District Community Foundation (PDCF). This grant will enable testing for the first time in 15 years to see what risk there is in swimming in the Tay River.

The Tay River as it passes through Perth attracts much attention for its beauty and its appeal to take a dip on a hot summer day. But is it safe to swim in the Tay River? The Health Unit stopped testing the Tay in Perth 15 years ago because of repeatedly high bacterial counts. Water testing by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has shown that counts of E-coli in the Tay in Perth have steadily risen since then. Patrick Larson, RVCA Senior Water Resources Technician, has said that the water may be safe to swim in about half the time according to their test results. The worst times tend to be after heavy rains when much pollution is washed into the river.

The funding grant from the PDCF will pay for a series of water tests to local Health Unit standards to measure bacterial levels used to determine if the water is safe for swimming. Carol Dillon, from the Friends of the Tay Watershed explained: “The purpose of the tests is to provide useful data so that people can make more informed decisions when they are considering swimming in the Tay. The test results will also be used as a basis for determining the sources of pollution leading to ways for improving the water quality of the Tay and will provide much-needed baselines for possible later comparison.” Peggy Land from the University Women said “We are very grateful for this funding. It allows us to move forward in addressing the health issues of this much valued river.”

For more information please contact Carol Dillon at info@tayriver.org