

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Supports Invasive Species Removal Along Ottawa Streams

OTTAWA, July 21, 2014 — The shores of six city streams are getting some extra attention thanks to the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TDFEF). TDFEF funding will allow the City Stream Watch Program to remove invasive species along Taylor Creek, Nepean Creek, Pinecrest Creek, Greens Creek, Stillwater Creek and Graham Creek.

"Invasive species like Himalayan balsam and yellow iris are putting intense pressure on these already stressed systems – and special projects like this help lessen the impact on the health of our communities and larger watershed community," says Chelsey Ellis, City Stream Coordinator at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. "With the support of the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, we can work with our exceptional community volunteers and make a big impact on our small streams!"

Stream monitoring done by City Stream Watch volunteers has identified the invasive plants Himalayan balsam and yellow iris along sections of our urban streams, which are threatening the biodiversity and bank stability of the tributaries to the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers.

"TD FEF is committed to ensuring every dollar donated stays in the local community," said Mary Desjardins, Executive Director, TD Friends of the Environment. "And we are thrilled to support the City Stream Watch Program which is an innovative group of individuals committed to protecting their local environment for the present and the future."

How do we do it?

City Stream Watch investigates our urban streams using volunteer citizen scientists. Over the course of the summer sampling season, the volunteers become very knowledgeable about the watercourses they work on. They travel the creek corridors by foot to record valuable information on the physical and biological features of our city's often forgotten streams. Once a survey is completed, rehabilitation projects, such as this invasive species removal, are identified.

Why focus on our small streams?

"Ninety-five percent of all shorelines in the Lower Rideau watershed are on the tributaries — not the Rideau," says Ellis. "These 'feeder' streams have a big role in the health of the Rideau River. Because of their collective length, our small creeks and streams have 20 times the impact in terms of cleansing runoff from the land, preventing erosion, providing fish spawning habitat and buffering the effects of nearby land uses."

City streams are recognized for their valuable environmental, social and recreational qualities and efforts to protect our urban streams directly support the goals of the Lower Rideau Watershed Strategy and Ottawa River Action Plan. The City Stream Watch Program supports these plans by providing important information on the tributaries of the Rideau, by identifying documented opportunities for streambank rehabilitation and cleanup and by moving forward with remedial work for the community and by the community.

"Thanks to TDFEF, the community can continue with their remedial efforts," says Ellis. Anyone interested in becoming a City Stream Watch volunteer and helping at one of the upcoming invasive species removal events can contact Chelsey Ellis at 613-692-3571 ext. 1180 or citystreamwatch@rvca.ca.

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More information:
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The City Stream Watch Program is a community-based partnership which includes the City of Ottawa, Heron Park Community Association, the National Defence Fish & Game Club, the Ottawa Flyfishers Society, the Rideau Roundtable, the Ottawa Stewardship Council, NCC and the Mississippi and Rideau Valley Conservation Authorities. Since 2003, the program has involved 1,285 volunteers that have provided 10,5000 hours of time surveying streams and undertaking special projects to improve creek and watershed health.

TD Friends of the Environment is a national charity committed to protecting the environment and greening communities across Canada. With the support of more than 140,000 donors, TD FEF has provided more than \$66 million to over 22,000 environmental projects and programs.

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