



AWQA Day, June 5th, 2009

A hands-on approach to increasing water quality awareness in Alberta

Have you ever wondered about the quality of water in your local stream or wetland? Students, seniors and everyone in between will have the opportunity to learn more about their local waterways during Alberta Water Quality Awareness (AWQA) Day on June 5, 2009.

Alberta Water Quality Awareness (AWQA) Day aims to increase people's awareness about the health and value of water in Alberta, through hands-on water quality testing. Participants in the program are provided with a free water quality test kit. This easy-to-use kit includes all of the materials needed to analyze four basic water quality parameters: temperature, pH, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. These basic measures of water quality have important implications for fish and wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and human health.

"Water is becoming an increasingly important resource throughout the world, including right here in Alberta," says Christy Urban, AWQA Day Coordinator. "Many Albertans have expressed a desire to learn more about water quality issues and to become involved in the management of Alberta's waterways. AWQA Day is one way for people to learn about water quality and contribute to the health of their watershed."

Albertans were able to get their 'feet wet' last year, during Alberta's third annual AWQA Day. "The program was a huge success, with over 3500 people, from across the province, actively testing water in their communities," says Urban. Families, individuals, schools, watershed groups, rural landowners, and community and youth groups all participated in the program. Together these groups collected and tested water samples from nearly 700 different locations, covering all seven of the major watersheds in Alberta. These results were compiled to create a 'snapshot' of water quality in the province. Results from 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 can be viewed at www.awqa.ca.

"Participants from last year really enjoyed the program and found it to be a worthwhile experience."

"Most people found that they increased their knowledge of water quality, and said they will participate again this year."

Everyone is invited to participate in AWQA Day 2009. Interested parties can register and order their free water quality test kit online at www.awqa.ca. The deadline for ordering test kits is April 30th. This kit can be used to test any stream, lake, river, wetland, dugout, pond, reservoir, slough or other surface waterbody in Alberta.

Water quality testing can be done anytime between May 1st and August 31st. Volunteer participants add their water quality information to the online database at www.awqa.ca, and together create a picture of water quality in Alberta.

AWQA Day is a program of the Alberta Lake Management Society in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Environment, Alberta Stewardship Network, and Inside Education.

AWQA Day is made possible through the generous support of our sponsors: EPCOR, TD Friends of the Environment, and City of Edmonton, Drainage Services.

For more information on Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day please visit www.awqa.ca.

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