

## Media Release

**Algonquin College Receives More than \$70,000 Grant to Expand Applied Research Project in the Muskrat Lake Watershed**

**(June 24, 2016-Pembroke, ON.)** An applied research project that started two years ago to assess the water quality of the Muskrat Lake Watershed will continue with the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). The Office of Applied Research at Algonquin College's Waterfront Campus in Pembroke has been awarded a \$70,625 grant to help farmers reduce nutrient impacts and soil erosion within the Muskrat Lake Watershed.

The 18-month initiative will involve Algonquin College Environmental Technician students and faculty, working with participating farmers and the Muskrat Watershed Council Agricultural Committee to install controlled tile drains and implement other best management practices on selected farm properties. The watershed encompasses parts of several municipalities including, Whitewater Region, Admaston/Bromley, Laurentian Valley, North Algona Wilberforce, and Horton Townships.

"Our government is pleased to support projects like these, which teach young Ontarians valuable techniques and knowledge, and have practical applications to our agri-food sector. By partnering with local farmers, the students and faculty of Algonquin College are able to share and gain expertise to protect Ontario's water and soil health, which are vital to sustainable agriculture," says Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



Three students will complete their summer co-operative education experience working on the initiative. Sarah Hall, Environmental Technician Program Coordinator and science advisor for the project, says "This is a very meaningful summer job for the students as they are working on real environmental issues. This is relevant on-the-job training and demonstrates the true benefits of co-op and applied research for college students," adds Hall.

This will be the first time that controlled tile drains have been tried in Renfrew County, however they have been successfully used in other areas of Ontario. Project Manager, Julie Sylvestre of Algonquin's Applied Research Office, says several additional students will play a role in collecting and interpreting data from air, water and soil samples that will be tested throughout the spring, summer and fall.

"This is the next step in the research that was started two years ago under the Water Adaptation Management and Quality Initiative" says Sylvestre, adding, "With support



1 College Way

Pembroke, Ontario

K8A 0C8

Community

and Student

Affairs

Department

Office: 613-735-4700

Ext. 2756

Fax: 613-735-8805

from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and members of the Muskrat Watershed Council, our students have made key contributions to furthering our understanding of this watershed.”

The drainage control structures help promote nutrient uptake by crops, can increase the crop yield, and have proven effective at reducing the amount of nutrients that make their way into local waterways. In Muskrat Lake, an abundance of nutrients has led to excessive plant growth and blue-green algal blooms.

The research project will be aided by the Muskrat Watershed Council, Renfrew County Stewardship Council, local farmers, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Renfrew County Soil and Crop Improvement program, and OMAFRA.

For more information,

Julie Sylvestre

Project Manager, Office of Applied Research

Algonquin College Waterfront Campus, Pembroke, ON

613 735 4700 ext. 2666

[sylvesj@algonquincollege.com](mailto:sylvesj@algonquincollege.com)

Jamie Bramburger

Manager of Community and Student Affairs

Algonquin College Waterfront Campus, Pembroke, ON

613-735-4700, ext. 2756

[brambuj@algonquincollege.com](mailto:brambuj@algonquincollege.com)