Media Release

Algonquin College Students Celebrate Muskrat Lake Watershed Success at Applied Research Day

(December 6, 2016-Pembroke, ON.) An exceptional student learning experience tackling a complex environmental issue is being celebrated at Algonquin College’s Waterfront Campus in Pembroke. Students in the Environmental Technician program are showcasing the work they have been doing under an applied research project intended to introduce best practices in managing farms and lakefront properties to improve the water quality of the Muskrat Lake watershed, near the village of Cobden.

For the past two years, the students and college faculty and staff have been working with farmers, property owners, local contractors and a team of experts to implement strategies to address the issues that have plagued the watershed for many years. These initiatives have included the installation of five controlled tile drain structures, a technologically advanced weather monitoring station, the planting of many streamside trees and shrubs, 3-D mapping, water and soil analysis and testing, and the development of a research plan for 2017.

The student’s work has been highlighted at the college’s annual Applied Research Day. Applied Research Manager, Julie Sylvestre, says that “Working within a multidisciplinary team has exposed the students to real world challenges and allowed them to help find solutions for the Muskrat Lake Watershed. It has been a very powerful learning experience involving multiple partners,” adds Sylvestre.

The projects have been funded by the Muskrat Watershed Council and Algonquin College’s Office of Applied Research and Innovation, with the financial support of the Great Lakes Guardian Program and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The Muskrat Watershed Council is the lead organization and is made up of a dedicated group of volunteers who are committed to working with all parties to find solutions to the issues facing the watershed.

Colleges are known for their ability to make connections with industry and communities and through applied research, students are gaining invaluable opportunities to fully integrate their academic studies with on-the-job training.
Environmental Technician Program Coordinator, Sarah Hall, says “This has been such a positive and productive year for our soon-to-be graduates, who were able to meet all of their goals and make strong connections with our agricultural community. Their work has produced on-the-ground solutions that can help reduce excess nutrient inputs into the Muskrat Lake, and that is worth celebrating,” exclaims Hall.

The Environmental Technician program is a compressed diploma that can be completed in less than 60 weeks. It includes an optional paid co-operative education experience within the environmental field. Graduates of the program find work across Canada in both the public and private sector, supporting environmental monitoring and strategy development and implementation.

Algonquin College’s Waterfront Campus is the largest of the college’s regional campuses and has carved a niche in the area of outdoor training. The Campus offers several programs that feature hundreds of hours of learning in the outdoors including Forestry Technician, Urban Forestry-Arboriculture, Outdoor Adventure and Outdoor Adventure Naturalist.

For more information,

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