

**Media Release****May 12, 2014****Algonquin College Receives Funding to Support Muskrat Watershed Research**

**PEMBROKE, ON** - Environmental Technician students at Algonquin College's Pembroke Campus will take on a leadership role in finding solutions to the challenges facing the Muskrat River watershed near Cobden. Through a \$70,000 grant administered by Farm & Food Care Ontario under its Water Adaptation Management and Quality Initiative (WAMQI), the students will engage in an applied research project that involves a number of practical initiatives. Their activities will be conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ottawa River Institute, Renfrew County Federation of Agriculture, Renfrew County Cattlemen's Association, and the newly-established Muskrat Watershed Council.

Over a ten-month period, the students will conduct water quality investigations that will provide invaluable data and information on the condition of the watershed. They will also develop visual tools that will help promote water-friendly agricultural solutions for the watershed which has been closely scrutinized for several years by various stakeholder groups.



***Photo: Environment Technician students Tanner Roderick and Allison Rosien take water samples for an applied research project on the Muskrat Lake watershed.***

Algonquin's Environmental Technician Program Coordinator, Sarah Hall, says this is an exciting project for the students to be involved in. "The issues of the Muskrat River watershed are well-known to our community and there's some wonderful momentum that has been generated towards identifying common goals while focussing on achievable outcomes. Our area is not alone in facing challenges such as algal blooms, beach closures, and deteriorating water quality, and our partners are committed to collaborating, sharing ideas, and finding approaches that will address these concerns," says Hall.

The project will commence in May 2014 and the students' findings will be presented to the public through an open forum in December 2015. This project is one of 28 that are being funded through the Growing Forward 2 grant, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative that will provide \$1.5-million to projects that support farm water quality and water quantity objectives and that will benefit Ontario agricultural producers and organizations.

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Algonquin’s Applied Research Project Officer, Julie Sylvestre, says, “We are excited to be involved in fostering sustainable agricultural approaches within the County and know that our students and faculty, working with our partners, can raise awareness of the issues, enhance the science, and help find solutions for the Muskrat River watershed.”

**Applied Research Projects:** Each year, hundreds of Algonquin College students participate in several applied research projects that enrich their learning experience at the College and benefit the greater community.

**About Farm & Food Care:** Farm & Food Care Ontario represents thousands of farmers and related businesses with a mandate to provide credible information on food and farming in Ontario.

**About Algonquin College:** Algonquin College is one of Ontario’s largest publicly-funded post-secondary institutes, with campuses in Ottawa, Pembroke and Perth. The Pembroke Campus is the largest of Algonquin’s regional campuses and serves a full-time student population of more than 900 students.

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**Growing Forward 2**  
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

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