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MEDIA RELEASE

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World Water Day March 22

Could a water shortage affect me? Is my drinking water safe? What can I do to protect my water? These are the kinds of questions raised by World Water Day, held annually on March 22nd. This year's theme is "Coping with water scarcity", a situation that some municipalities are facing right here in Ontario, despite our abundance of fresh water.

World Water Day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 as a way to draw international attention to the lack of clean, safe drinking water worldwide. More than 1 billion people around the world (about 20% of our population) currently lack safe drinking water, and some predict this number will rise dramatically within twenty years.

"People are becoming more aware and more concerned about the health of their water resources, and this is a positive change," says Ian Macnab, Chief Administrative Officer for Kawartha Conservation. "We all use the resource so we all have a role to play in safeguarding it. If we practise good resource management, we'll be preventing problems instead of trying to fix them after they occur," he added.

Looking after water resources begins at the local level. On behalf of its watershed municipalities, Kawartha Conservation monitors dozens of sites for water quality and water quantity. Monitoring helps establish a baseline of water conditions and provides an early warning system. Lindsay's drinking water source, Lake Scugog is currently undergoing a major water management study, led by Kawartha Conservation in partnership with the Township of Scugog. The goal of the study is to determine the sources of nutrients affecting lake quality, and to recommend steps to reduce the nutrients to ensure the lake is operating at its optimum capacity.

Water users can also contribute to a healthy water system. They can reduce their water consumption by limiting lawn watering during the growing seasons; installing low-flow showerheads and toilets; and waiting for a full load to do laundry. Users can help protect water quality by taking leftover paint to a waste facility instead of pouring it down the drain; washing cars at a carwash instead of in the driveway where suds and dirt go untreated back into nearby lakes and rivers; and by using care around wellheads to prevent oil, gas and pesticides from reaching the groundwater.

For information on World Water Day visit <http://www.worldwaterday.org>. To learn about the Kawartha Watershed and Kawartha Conservation's water-focussed programs and projects, visit www.kawarthaconservation.com.

Kawartha Conservation is a watershed-based environmental organization focussed on leading the way to abundant clean water within a healthy landscape. It is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario providing natural resources management. The Kawartha watershed intersects portions of the City of Kawartha Lakes; Township of Scugog; Township of Brock; Municipality of Clarington; Township of Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Township of Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan.

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