



MEDIA RELEASE

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Canadian Lake Simcoe project chosen as finalist in International Thies Riverprize

A groundbreaking Canadian river management project has been announced as a finalist in the prestigious AUD\$300,000 (EU\$189,000) International Thies Riverprize - the world's largest prize in its field.

The Lake Simcoe project, initiated by a collaborative partnership to implement The Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS), was chosen as a finalist for the environmental protection and restoration of Lake Simcoe.

The winners of the International Thies Riverprize will be announced at a special ceremony on Tuesday 4 September 2007 during the 10th International Riversymposium and Environmental Flows Conference in the city of Brisbane, Australia, from 3 to 6 September. The International Thies Riverprize is a partnership between the International Riverfoundation (IRF) and Riverfestival.

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Chair Virginia Hackson said the LSEMS has made significant progress in developing a sustainable approach to water management for Lake Simcoe and its watershed.

"For decades Lake Simcoe served as a source of drinking water and a valuable natural resource for fishing, tourism and other recreational activities. More than 20 years ago local municipalities and the public raised concern over water quality and fish stocks which lead to the development of the LSEMS in 1990," Ms Hackson said.

"More than 800 improvement projects have enhanced a range of natural resources for 350,000 residents in the Lake Simcoe basin. The innovative project has also promoted stewardship for landowners to protect natural resources on privately owned properties," she said.

"Monitoring reports over the last six years indicates phosphorus loading to Lake Simcoe has been reduced, dissolved oxygen concentrations have increased and wild lake trout are now surviving to adulthood.

"Being chosen as an International Thies Riverprize finalist and having an international panel of scientists validate the quality of our work is very gratifying. We are thrilled and honored that the LSEMS program has been recognized among such distinguished company."

Riversymposium Chair Professor Paul Greenfield said the LSEMS project exemplifies the spirit of the International Thies Riverprize.

"Many countries are facing a water crisis and now more than ever it is important for the International Thies Riverprize to reward and promote best practice water management. All people involved in the Lake Simcoe project should feel proud their efforts have been recognised in this way."

Three other government and community groups from Austria, New Zealand and China received recognition as finalists for the Australian prize for their work in tackling pollution, water quality, erosion and flooding.

More information on the International Thies Riverprize can be found at www.riversymposium.com.

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Additional information and images are available upon request.

Media contacts:

Joanna Atzori
Consultant, Sequel Communications
Phone +61 7 3251 8122
joanna@sequelcommunications.com.au

Michael Walters
Director, Watershed Management
Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
Phone + 905 895 1281ext 234
m.walters@lsrca.on.ca