

Thursday, July 2, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



CITY STAFF AND WELLAND FLOATFEST ORGANIZERS DISCOURAGE GATHERINGS ON THE WATERWAY

Welland, ON - The City of Welland is reminding residents and visitors that waterway safety is everyone's responsibility. Welland's Recreation Corridor attracts people from across Niagara during the summer season to enjoy picnicking, canoeing, kayaking, and stand up paddle board recreation. Advanced swimmers also use the waterway in small groups to train for competition. Although the waterway offers fun and relief from the summer heat, using the waterway is a risk and should be taken seriously.

Canadian Tire Welland Floatfest—previously scheduled for July 5, 2020—was cancelled due to the global pandemic and Provincial Emergency Orders allowing for gatherings of ten or fewer people. Organizers from Welland Floatfest and Welland city staff are discouraging residents from gathering on the waterway with floatation devices.

The waterway is unsupervised; therefore, gatherings on the waterway are potentially dangerous and could lead to serious injury. In addition, Niagara residents are practicing physical distancing of two or more metres due to COVID-19, which would be difficult to maintain on the waterway. To ensure physical distancing guidelines, the city's By-law staff will monitor the waterway the weekend of July 4-5.

"This is a challenging summer for our residents," said Adam Eckhart, Deputy Fire Chief. "Floatfest is one of Welland's signature summer events, and everyone looks forward to it. Without Floatfest event coordinators in place to ensure safety, it's a hazard for people to continue the event without any safety protocols in place. Floatfest is cancelled this year, and we're asking residents to respect this decision."

For more information on Canadian Tire Welland Floatfest, visit wellandfloatfest.com. For more information on Welland's Recreation Corridor, visit yourchannel.welland.ca/welland-recreation-corridor.

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