



## **Over 600 people turn out for 15<sup>th</sup> Annual 'Paddle the Don'**

***Portion of 2008 pledges show nearly \$40,000 raised so far for rehabilitation of historic Toronto river***

(Toronto, May 5, 2008) Sunny skies helped brighten the spirits for 600 paddlers as they gathered yesterday morning to set off down Toronto's Don River. The annual event is an occasion for individuals and corporate teams to raise money and create awareness about the environmental issues affecting Toronto's Don Waterway. All money raised is used for rehabilitation activities.

Participants this year included Kathryn Wynne, Ontario's Minister of Education and MPP for Don Valley West, Michael Prue, MPP Beaches-East York, Toronto City Councillors Paula Fletcher and Janet Davis and representatives from Churchill Cellars (Banrock Station Wines) and Toronto Region Conservation.

"Today's turnout was terrific," said Ted Robinson, Vice President, Sales and Marketing for Churchill Cellars (Banrock Station Wines). "This is Banrock's fourth year supporting 'Paddle the Don' and each one has been better than the last. As a company that has demonstrated its commitment to improving habitats around the world, we are pleased to contribute to such a worthwhile cause."

Beginning in the Oak Ridges Moraine north of the city, the Don River is 34 kilometres long and covers nearly 320 square kilometers of watershed. It weaves its way through the heart of Canada's largest urban region and ends at the Toronto harbourfront in Lake Ontario.

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Don River was neglected and polluted by industrial expansion. In the late 1960s, increasing development, including the construction of the Don Valley Parkway, reduced the natural areas of the watershed and helped generate heavy flooding and sediment laden waters. Efforts to restore the Don gathered support in the late 1980s as volunteers initiated garbage cleanups, tree plantings, and restorations of eight wetlands in the lower reaches of the valley.

"With each passing year, 'Paddle the Don' enhances Torontonians understanding of the importance and benefits derived from the Don River," said Adele Freeman, Director of Watershed Management for Toronto and Region Conservation. "We are delighted that Banrock has taken a leadership role again this year and acknowledge their involvement in helping to raise awareness about rehabilitating the Don River."

Since the Banrock Station Wines Corporate Challenge began in 2002, paddlers have raised \$125,000. The money is held by the Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto and will go toward a large regeneration project in the Don watershed.

**For high resolution images or to arrange an interview with Ted Robinson, contact:**

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*Banrock Station Wines is recognized internationally for its pioneering concept of funding environmental projects by donating partial proceeds of every worldwide purchase of its wines. Banrock Station is a world-renowned rehabilitated wetland ([www.banrockstation.com](http://www.banrockstation.com)).*