



NEWS RELEASE



RBC  
Blue Water  
Project™

## **Which way to the beach? Get instant, up-to-date information for over 800 beaches in Canada and the US with new *Swim Guide* app**

*First-of-its-kind app uses 70 government sources to help users source the closest beaches and cleanest waters – and how to get there*

TORONTO, ON (June 10, 2011) – For millions of summer beach seekers, finding and enjoying that perfect stretch of sand and water has just become a whole lot easier, with the launch of *Swim Guide*, a new, free smartphone app. Created by a network of nonprofit watershed protection organizations, *Swim Guide* helps you locate the closest, cleanest beach, get directions, view photos, determine if the water is safe for swimming – and share the whole adventure with your friends and family on your social networks.

*“Swim Guide changes the way we use our beaches,”* says Mark Mattson, President & Waterkeeper, Lake Ontario Waterkeeper. *“In the past, you had to do a lot of research to find a beach close to you, or to check on the quality of the water, but *Swim Guide* makes beach-going easy. It really encourages you to enjoy the natural environment in your own backyard.”*

According to the 2011 Water Attitudes study\*, almost nine in ten Canadians (87%) are concerned about the quality of water in the lakes in which they swim, and almost two thirds (63%) believe the quality of water in our lakes is getting worse. The new app will help alleviate some of these concerns, says Mattson, by providing real-time information about water quality and cleanliness.

*“It’s great because it also allows users to report any pollution or environmental concerns to ensure that our beaches remain safe for swimming,”* he says.

*Swim Guide* includes original descriptions and photographs of 800 different beaches in Ontario, British Columbia, New York State, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. Later this summer, Edmonton Alberta and Miami-area beaches will be added, and *Swim Guide* will continue to expand until it covers beaches in every major beach community in North America.

The innovative app has its roots with a team at Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, who originally set out to determine if it was safe to swim in Lake Ontario. Seven years later, with input from more than 70 different beach monitoring sources, more than 70,000 points of data, and a \$400,000 grant from the RBC Blue Water Project, the answer is ‘yes, usually - but now you can check our real-time data to be sure.’

*“RBC is proud to be involved with the launch of the *Swim Guide* as it is the perfect example of how we can create a culture of water stewardship,”* says Shari Austin, Vice President, Corporate Citizenship, RBC. *“Our 2011 Canadian Water Attitudes Study told us that Canadians are very concerned about the quality of water in Canada’s lakes. We hope that this new *Swim Guide* App will not only help Canadians feel more confident about choosing a place that is safe to swim, but also be mindful of the importance of keeping our waters healthy.”*

To learn more about the *Swim Guide* watch this video: <http://bit.ly/ITCVeh>. The free *Swim Guide* is available now in the app Store<sup>SM</sup>: <http://bit.ly/SwimGuideApp> for iPhone®, iPad®, and iPod touch®. It is also available on the web at: [www.theswimguide.org](http://www.theswimguide.org). Happy Swimming!

### **About the RBC Blue Water Project**

The RBC Blue Water Project is an innovative, wide-ranging, 10-year global commitment to help protect the world's most precious natural resource: fresh water. It includes a \$50 million philanthropic commitment to organizations that protect watersheds and ensure access to clean drinking water. The RBC Blue Water Project also promotes responsible water use through awareness programs and supports programs that encourage businesses to develop and commercialize innovative solutions to the water issues facing the world. Since 2007, RBC has pledged over \$28 million to more than 400 not-for-profit organizations worldwide that protect watersheds or ensure access to clean drinking water. For more information, visit [www.rbc.com/bluewater](http://www.rbc.com/bluewater).

### **About Waterkeeper Organizations**

Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, Fraser Riverkeeper, North Saskatchewan Riverkeeper, and Biscayne Bay Waterkeeper are independent charities working to create communities where you can safely swim, drink and fish. They are members of Waterkeeper Alliance, a global movement of water protection organizations founded in 1999 by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

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\*The Canadian Water Attitudes Study is an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between January 10-17, 2011, on behalf of RBC and Unilever and sponsored by the UN Water for Life Decade.