



Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha

children's water festival

2019

Final Report

Prepared by Irene Heaven

Many thanks to ...



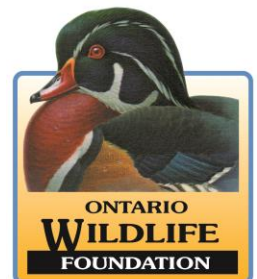
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Water Depot

... Thank You



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Overview

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival is a unique approach to inspire children to become wise stewards of water and related systems through educational, fun and hands-on activities.

Mission statement from HMK Children's Water Festival Strategic Plan 2011.

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival (HMK Children's Water Festival or HMKCWF) has been successfully delivering free water education to our youth on an annual basis since 2005. The HMK Children's Water Festival is a fun filled educational event offered free-of-charge to students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) area. The TLDSB covers a large geographic area, approximately 11,500 Km², encompassing Haliburton County, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the City of Kawartha Lakes. These Districts share watersheds and waterways impressing the need for water education to ensure healthy water and environments for the communities of these areas and beyond.

At the HMK Children's Water Festival, hundreds of participating students, teachers and parent supervisors are challenged to consider the importance of water to human and environmental health as well as the role of water in economic development. The HMK Children's Water Festival brings together the expertise of educators, water quality and quantity specialists, community volunteers, Trent University students, Fleming College students, Secondary Leadership Students, conservation groups, industry and government to provide elementary students the opportunity to discover the importance and diversity of water. Each day of the festival is filled with interactive, stimulating hands-on activities which relay messages on water conservation, technology, protection and science. Attending the HMK Children's Water Festival and learning in such an interactive way not only complements classroom lessons and helps teachers fulfill Ontario's school curriculum expectations but also excites and motivates students to share information that they acquire with others, causing a ripple effect. Through this experience, participating students come to understand that their attitude towards water matters and that their actions can make a difference and that, ultimately, we are all responsible for maintaining healthy water systems for healthy living.

This year, in 2019, effort was made to incorporate climate change education within the festival. It is the intent of the HMKCWF committee to continue offering activities with new water focuses as well as increase the festival's overall climate change content. Water and climate change are important issues that are interconnected and are important to understand. It is therefore a natural and necessary direction to expand learning opportunities in both areas when educating about healthy environments and healthy living.

The HMK Children's Water Festival is a two day event which educates hundreds of students during a relatively short time frame, providing children with positive experiential learning that compliments curriculum being taught in their individual classrooms at several different schools. Programs initiated at the festival are also aimed at expanding the learning experience beyond that day. The HMK Children's Water Festival Teacher's Resource Guide was developed and made available to teachers in 2012 through distribution of hard copies to school libraries as well as a downloadable version from the HMKCWF website, www.hmwaterfestival.ca. The Water Hero program continues to be popular on site and the 6th "Big Splash" contest will be running until December 1st, 2019. The intended outcome in both cases is to increase participation in water education and to promote sharing of this information back in the classroom, within the home and in the community.

The HMK Children's Water Festival is a project of the charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) and had its 14th successful annual festival on September 30th and October 1st,

2019. The HMK Children’s Water Festival steering committee would like to thank all our partners, financial supporters and volunteers that have been, and continue to be, vital in making this event the success that it is!

Steering Committee

The HMK Children’s Water Festival steering committee consists of representatives from supporting organizations and other interested individuals:

Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) – Jim McHardy, jjmchardy@sympatico.ca
– Chair Person

Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) - Norm Thomas, thomas75@xittel.ca
Kinark Outdoor Centre – Ryan Mortell, ryan.mortell@kinark.on.ca

– Facilities Sub-committee lead

U-links Centre for Community Based Research – Daniela Pagliaro, admin@ulinks.ca

– Volunteers Sub-committee lead

Township of Minden Hills – Elisha Weiss, eweiss@mindenhills.ca

Other interested individuals comprising the HMKCWF Steering Committee are:

Rick Whitteker – richard.whitteker@flamingcollege.ca, Program Sub-committee lead

Tony Armstrong, tony.armstrong@tldsb.on.ca, (past trustee for Trillium Lakelands District School Board)

Irene Heaven – iheaven@outtolearn.ca, HMK Children’s Water Festival coordinator.

FEEL is a registered charitable organization in Haliburton and is the parent organization for the Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children’s Water Festival.

The 2019 Festival

The 2019 HMK Children’s Water Festival was held on Monday September 30th and Tuesday October 1st at the Kinark Outdoor Centre. Located just west of Carnarvon, the Kinark Outdoor Centre is an ideal location for this event as it is centrally located within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board, including Haliburton County, Muskoka District and the City of Kawartha Lakes. The facility is well equipped with indoor areas, a dining hall for volunteer meals, and a spacious natural area for outdoor activity stations. Kinark’s forested landscape allows access to a lake, wetlands and open areas thereby connecting the activity centres and their messages to the landscape and providing an overall enhanced experience for participants. The Kinark Outdoor Centre provides exclusive use of all its amenities to the HMK Children’s Water Festival during the festival.

Registration

A digital invitation to register for the 2019 HMK Children’s Water Festival was distributed to past participating teachers and all elementary schools within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in late April, 2019. Support from the TLDSB communications department ensured that all elementary schools within the TLDSB were delivered these invitations. The invitation was also uploaded to the TLDSB staff bulletin board. In addition, the invitation flyer was posted on the HMK Children's Water Festival website and Facebook page.

Due to the festival’s popularity and limited space, maximum registration was reached mid-June and a waiting list was established. The waiting list was utilized in early September to optimize the overall festival attendance as registered classes confirmed numbers. The HMKCWF committee believe that the capacity of the festival is between 550 and 600 per day. Participation of more children each day would affect the positive learning experience individuals receive at this educational event. Furthermore, the number of busses that can be accommodated on site daily is also limited.

In total, 966 elementary students from grades 2-6 attended the 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival along with their teachers and parent supervisors. Ten elementary schools from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board participated in this year’s event. As well, the Haliburton Home School Group attended as did two additional families, totaling 26 children and 10 adults. Over the past several years, the HMK Children’s Water Festival has had consistently high participation with annual daily attendance ranging from 500-620 students per day. This year’s lower than expected attendance, 484 children/day, was due to last minute forced cancellations because of bussing issues and the threat of work to rule by teaching assistants. The late timing of these cancellations meant that those spaces were unable to be filled by other interested classes and therefore the maximum capacity of the festival was not reached. Registration capacity was reached by mid-June and there was a need for a waiting list and this indicates that the HMK Children's Water Festival is still considered a meaningful and positive learning experience that teachers value. The festival’s active, outdoor and hands on learning environment enables teachers to make connections to their classroom teachings throughout the year, enriching the children's overall education.

	County of Haliburton		Muskoka District		City of Kawartha Lakes		Other (ie. Home School, Out of District, etc.)		Festival Total	Av./day
	Student #'s	%	Student #'s	%	Student #'s	%	Student #'s	%		
2005 (3days)	309	27%	76	7%	772	66%			1157	386
2006 (3days)	322	23%	350	25%	747	52%			1419	473
2007 (3days)	407	46%	300	34%	146	20%			883	294
2008 (2days)	44	10%	86	20%	300	70%			430	215
2009 (2days)	152	21%	80	12%	481	67%			713	357
2010 (2 days)	130	16%	280	34%	316	38%	108	13%	834	417
2011 (2 days)	167	18%	427	46%	338	36%			932	466
2012 (2 days)	264	29%	370	41%	269	29%	10	1%	913	457
2013 (2 days)	300	26%	620	55%	207	18%	9	1%	1136	568
2014 (2 days)	374	30%	564	45%	293	24%	13	1%	1244	622

*2015 (2 days)	330	33%	285	28%	374	37%	17	2%	1006	503
2016 (2 days)	262	21%	476	39%	472	38%	24	2%	1234	617
2017 (2 days)	211	19%	494	45%	369	34%	14	1%	1088	544
2018 (2 days)	268	24%	634	56%	209	19%	17	1%	1128	564
2019 (2 days)	0	0%	892	92%	50	5%	26	3%	968	484

**Festival deferred to Sept. 26 & 27, 2016 due to work to rule directives by elementary school teachers association. Represented here are registrations numbers prior to work to rule action in early June. Numbers are included here to indicate the interest of teachers to participate.*

While the HMK Children’s Water Festival is physically located in Minden Hills, its messages reach out beyond the municipal boundaries, educating and impacting the whole of Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. In 2019, two schools from Haliburton County registered a total of 154 elementary students but then cancelled in mid-September. For the first time, no schools from the County of Haliburton attended the HMKCFW. This is very unusual and normally, the education provided by the HMK Children’s Water Festival reaches students who live in the immediate area of Haliburton County as well City of Kawartha Lakes, District of Muskoka and beyond these municipal boundaries.

Activity Centres

In 2019, the HMK Children's Water Festival offered a total of 42 activity centres for participants to choose from. Thirty-two of these educational centres are owned and maintained by the HMK Children’s Water Festival committee. Three of these activity centres were newly developed for this year: Polar Melt Down, The Power of Water and Water Scramble. An additional three activities were modified to enable self-directed learning in lieu of sufficient numbers of volunteers for facilitation: Creeks & Critters, Shoreline Do’s & Don’ts and Tread Lightly. Another activity, “The Fish is Right”, was re-developed to accommodate two different activities for more effective delivery of information. For this year’s festival, “The Great Swim Off” was introduced and delivered to participating students. Through a fun relay race, this activity taught students about adaptations of fish for survival in different habitats. It is the intent of the HMKCFW committee to redevelop the second portion of this activity for the 2020 festival into “Name that Fish” which will familiarize students with different types of fish. Funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation, the RBC Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment permitted the committee to make these necessary modifications.

Ten activity centres were made available through the involvement of Outside Presenters. In total, seven organizations donated time, resources and 36 person days, to provide demonstrations for seven activity stations at the 2019 HMK Children’s Water Festival. An additional two organizations provided activity station equipment and props for three activities which were manned by festival volunteers. Listed below are those Outside Presenters who were involved with the 2019 HMK Children’s Water Festival and have been valuable partners in the past:

1. **“Algonquin Highlands Fire Rescue”** presented by the Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Service
2. **“Bugs in the Mud”** activity borrowed from the Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

3. **“Creeks and Critters”** activity borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
4. **“Gchi-Nbi: Sacred Water”** presented by TRACKS Youth Program
5. **“Getting to Know the Osprey”** presented by Friends of the Osprey
6. **“Haliburton Fire Crew”** presented by Haliburton Fire Centre, Ministry of Natural Resources
7. **“OPP Marine Unit”** presented by Ontario Provincial Police
8. **“Shoreline Do's & Don'ts”** model borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
9. **“Wash Out!”** presented by Muskoka Watershed Council
10. **“Wonderful Wetlands”** presented by Kawartha Conservation

The number and diversification of activity stations is important in maintaining a high quality learning experience for participants, including returning students and teachers from previous years. This emphasises the importance of continuously upgrading activity centre content, developing new activity centres as well as establishing a rotation of activity centres. The HMKCFW committee has decided to make an annual commitment to the delivery of 30 volunteer led activity centres from their library of approximately 40 activity centers. These activities will be complemented by those that can be self-directed as well as those offered by Outside Presenters. This strategy will ensure that all activity centres are facilitated and delivered in the most effective manner safeguarding the intended learning outcomes for attending students.

Another Outside Presenter who is essential to the successful delivery of a safe educational event is the Haliburton County Emergency Medical Services. This organization has been a long-time supporter of the HMK Children's Water Festival by providing on-site first aid for the two day event. The Haliburton County EMS continues to be a critical component in providing a safe experience for all participants.

Activity stations and the messages relayed from them are relevant to learning expectations of the Ontario Curriculum. To assist teachers, the activity stations are grouped into themes: Water Conservation, Water Attitudes, Water Technology, Water Protection and Water Science. It is recognized that many of the activities could belong to more than one of the five themes listed. The activity centres available to the 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival participants are listed below with new centres indicated:

WC: Water Conservation WA: Water Attitudes WT: Water Technology WP: Water Protection WS: Water Science

Activity Centre	Theme	Location	Map #
Algonquin Highlands Fire Service	WC	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	23
Beaver Fever	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	33
Blooming Jeopardy	WP	The Pines	36
Bugs in the Mud	WS	Waterfront (Under Open Shelter)	7
Creeks and Critters *	WP	Waterfront	9
Earth in the Balance	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	21
Froggy ... You are Outta There!	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	22
Gchi-Nbi: "Sacred Water"	WA	Waterfront	11
GREAT Lakes!	WS	Waterfront	1
Haliburton Fire Crew	WC	Waterfront	6
How Clear is Your Lake?	WS	Waterfront (Under Open Shelter)	8
How Wet is Our Planet?	WS	Eagle's Nest (Front Porch)	31
It's a Trout's Life	WP	Waterfront	2
Just Dam It!	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	34
Lather Up!	WC	The Pines	37

	Migration Headache	WP	The Pines	41
	Mother Nature's Respirator	WS	Waterfront	10
	Ontario Provincial Police Marine Unit	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	19
	Osprey Survivor	WS	Dining Hall (Outside)	17
	Pioneer Water Race	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	18
NEW	Polar Melt Down!	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	27
	Reign in Garbage! (EnviroScape® Model)	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	24
	Riparian Repair	WP	Behind Dining Hall (Under Shelter)	13
	Road Salt: the good, the bad & the salty!	WT	Eagle's Nest (Back Porch)	32
	Rolling Through the Shed	WP	Baseball Diamond (Hill Beside)	15
	Round You Go, H ₂ O!	WS	Waterfront	3
	Shoreline Do's & Don'ts *	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	29
	Stream Savers	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	25
Upgraded	The Great Swim Off	WP	Waterfront	5
NEW	The Power of Water	WT	Behind Dining Hall (Under Shelter)	12
	Tread Lightly *	WA	The Pines (Self-led)	35
	Turtle Trauma	WP	The Pines	38
	Unwelcomed Guests	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	20
	Up on the Watershed	WA	The Pines	40
	Wash Out!	WA	Waterfront	39
	Water Does Wonders	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	28
	Water Hero Scavenger Hunt	WA	Throughout Festival Grounds, Finish at Water Hero Headquarters	16
	Water Runs Downhill	WS	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	26
NEW	Water Scramble	WA	Throughout Festival Grounds, Finish at Water Hero Headquarters	16
	What's Coming?	WS	Baseball Diamond (Hill Beside)	14
	Why So Porous?	WS	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	30
	Wonderful Wetlands	WP	The Pines	4
*May be run as a self-guided activity				

A total of 3 new activities were developed and featured at the 2019 Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival. Funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF) in 2019 were used by the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to develop: "Water Scramble", "The Power of Water" and our first climate change themed activity, "Polar Melt Down!".

The "Water Scramble" is a scavenger hunt style activity which encourages students to look for numbered water drop signs hidden throughout the festival grounds. These signs have a letter on the back which students record on a sheet given to their group upon their arrival at the festival. Once all letters have been found and recorded students are challenged to unscramble the letters to complete a phrase. Groups of students are then asked to visit the Water Hero Headquarters to reveal the phrase and learn more about its meaning. This year's phrase was "Wetlands are the Earth's sink's and sponges". At the Water Hero Headquarters students learned more about wetlands and the important roles they play in mitigating issues associated with climate change. Wetlands were introduced as carbon sinks and their unique role in flood attenuation through

Look for →
these signs!



Write down what you find on the back of each sign below.

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 8 _____ |

Find all 8 signs; unscramble the word ... What does the phrase reveal?

are the 's  s &  es

What do they hold and absorb?

Come tell us at the Water Hero Headquarters and collect a prize!

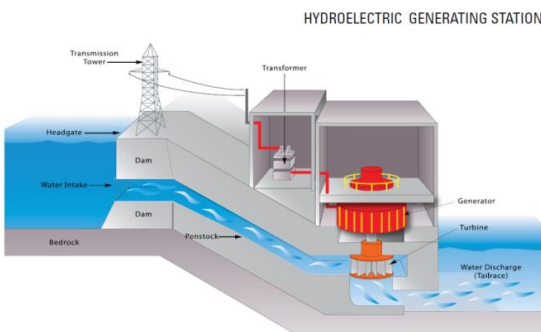
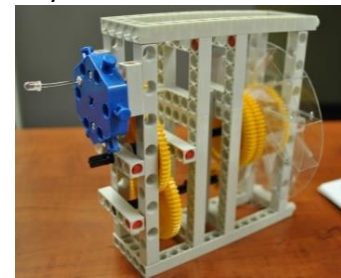


their ability to hold and slowly release water was explored. Students were given a keepsake for their participation, and this year's keepsake was a cloth book bag donated by Ontario Power Generation.

More and more extreme environmental events related to climate change and water (flooding, severe fires, draughts, weather, etc.) are occurring. Therefore the HMK Children's Water Festival committee decided to broaden the scope of the educational content of the water festival to include activity centres about climate change. With funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation, "Polar Melt Down!" was developed and debuted at the 2019 festival. Using models of the Arctic and Antarctic, along with heat lamps, students are introduced to the effects of global warming on the Earth's polar ice caps. By comparing the effects of melting ice from a landmass covered with ice with that of a floating ice cap, potential consequences for coastal communities are discussed and positive changes that we can make locally to reduce these effects are explored.



The HMKCWF committee continuously assesses the range of activity centres, identifies information gaps and attempts to fill those gaps through Outside Presenters and/or the development of new activity centres. Energy and hydropower was such an identified gap. This year, funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Foundation allowed the committee to purchase hydropower experiment kits which provided the materials for water wheel models to be constructed. These



hands on models allowed students to experiment with water and wheel action to produce electricity. A large banner donated by the Ontario Power Generation provided a visual teaching tool to help facilitators interpret student's findings and explain hydropower plants and their role in the production and distribution of power to our communities. This activity provided a fun means for students to learn about the force of water and how it is used to generate clean, reliable and renewable energy.

Annually there is general maintenance required for all HMKCWF owned activities. Funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation, RBC Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment enabled materials to be purchased that were necessary for general upkeep and maintenance of the 30 HMKCWF owned activity centres which were going to be delivered at the 2019 festival.

TD Friends of the Environment provided necessary funds to continue the Water Hero Scavenger Hunt activity. This activity was introduced in 2012 and has been an anticipated on-site activity ever since. Upon arrival at the festival, students are given challenge sheets and must work together



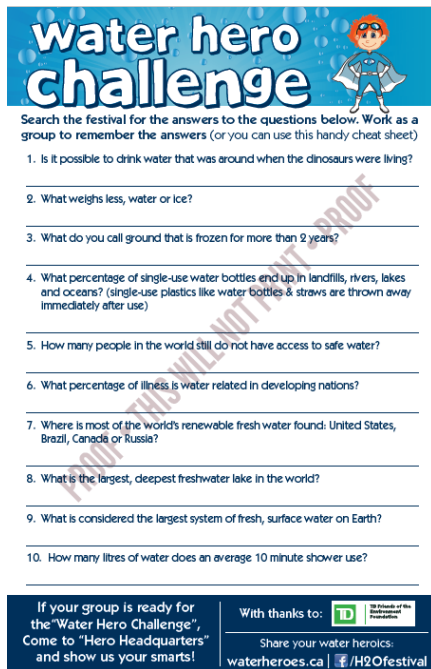
Tattoo

in small groups to find hidden water facts throughout the festival grounds. This scavenger hunt helps disperse larger numbers of participating students as well as provides a fun group oriented activity. The Water Hero Scavenger Hunt also creates excitement in students about being water stewards and encourages them to continue being good "water heroes" beyond the festival day. Once completed, students are given "Water Hero" bracelets,



Stickers

tattoos and stickers as fun keepsakes. These also act as reminders to students that they are water heroes and to encourage them to continue being good water ambassadors in their classrooms, homes and the broader community. This year, as well as purchasing water hero keepsakes, a different set of questions and answers were developed for new challenge sheets and ten corresponding water hero signs.





water hero challenge

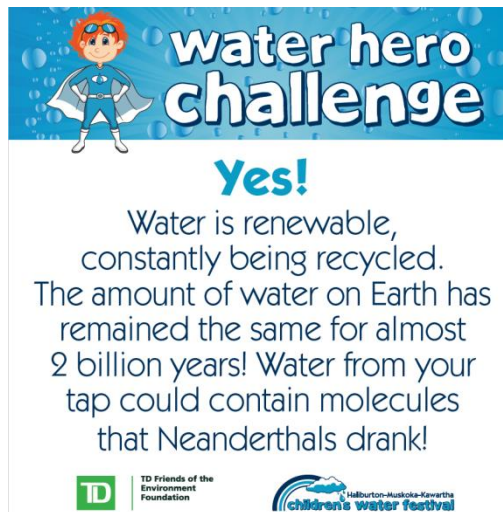
Search the festival for the answers to the questions below. Work as a group to remember the answers (or you can use this handy cheat sheet)

1. Is it possible to drink water that was around when the dinosaurs were living?
2. What weighs less, water or ice?
3. What do you call ground that is frozen for more than 2 years?
4. What percentage of single-use water bottles end up in landfills, rivers, lakes and oceans? (single-use plastics like water bottles & straws are thrown away immediately after use)
5. How many people in the world still do not have access to safe water?
6. What percentage of illness is water related in developing nations?
7. Where is most of the world's renewable fresh water found: United States, Brazil, Canada or Russia?
8. What is the largest, deepest freshwater lake in the world?
9. What is considered the largest system of fresh, surface water on Earth?
10. How many litres of water does an average 10 minute shower use?

If your group is ready for the "Water Hero Challenge", Come to "Hero Headquarters" and show us your smarts!

With thanks to:  TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Share your water heroics: waterheroes.ca |  /H2Ofestival



water hero challenge

Yes!

Water is renewable, constantly being recycled. The amount of water on Earth has remained the same for almost 2 billion years! Water from your tap could contain molecules that Neanderthals drank!

 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation 

Example of New Sign

New Challenge Sheet



Presenting a Heroic Contest!

Your School can make a Big Splash!

Share your water conservation ideas! The school with the most ideas will win the "Big Splash" award!

water you waiting for?

Post your ideas today at: waterheroes.ca or  /H2Ofestival

 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation 



The Big Splash Award Contest encourages students to enter their water saving ideas through the Water Hero website (www.waterheroes.ca) after the festival. The school that has the most water saving ideas entered is presented with the Big Splash Award which is hosted at the school until the following HMK Children's Water Festival. It is with the help of TD FEF that this contest and award is possible.

The goal of the HMK Children's Water Festival committee is to maintain a range of topics and have a diverse repertoire of activity stations at the festival. Through the participation of Outside Presenters, lending of equipment from organizations and donations of funds for activity development, this goal will continue to be met.

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the success of the HMK Children's Water Festival. Over its two day run, there were 258 volunteers leading activity centres, registering schools, parking busses and ensuring an overall positive experience for all participants of the festival. These enthusiastic volunteers included HMKCWF steering committee members, FEEL Board members, Outside Presenters, 20 members from the community (mainly from Haliburton Highlands), 94 Trent University students, 58 students from Fleming College (Lindsay) and 25 students from the Kawartha Pine Ridge Youth Leadership in Sustainability class.

Through a partnership with Trent University and facilitation by U-Links for Community Based Research, students from the first year Environmental and Resource Studies Program can volunteer at the HMKCWF for

part of their course. This year we had a total of 94 students from this program which is significantly higher than last year and on par with previous years. Twenty-five students from the Youth Leadership in Sustainability Class in Peterborough participated for their second year. Secondary students jointly facilitated activity centres alongside Trent students to attending elementary students. This newly forged partnership is important as it not only increases the volunteer base for delivery of a successful event but also increases the breadth of education that the HMK Children's Water Festival provides. The involvement of secondary students adds another layer to the experiential learning received at the festival.

A similar partnership to that with Trent University was initiated with Fleming College three years ago. First and second year students from the Outdoor Instructional Skills Course volunteer at the HMK Children's Water Festival as part of their course. A total of 58 students provided exceptional effort in facilitating important water based messages to younger students while gaining an invaluable learning experience.

Developing partnerships at the secondary level in combination with the existing post-secondary partnerships is exciting and has potential to extend the breadth of valuable experiential learning that can occur at the HMK Children's Water Festival for these students through mentorship opportunities. It also creates an environment of integrated learning by multiple academic levels: elementary, secondary and post-secondary.

Budget & Supporters

The total operating budget for the 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival is \$94,180.00. The In-Kind support for the HMK Children's Water Festival contributes to approximately 64 percent of the operating budget, bringing the actual fiscal cost of the 2019 festival down to \$33,750.00. Without In-Kind support, the overall costs of the HMK Children Water Festival would be significantly higher, emphasising the importance of volunteers, Outside Presenters and in-kind contributions towards delivering this successful, high quality educational event.

The HMK Children's Water Festival involves a year of organization and therefore has necessary associated costs throughout the entire year. It is through the continued support from traditional supporters as well as the dedication of Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning and the HMK Children's Water Festival committee that this year's financial requirements were met. The outcome of this dedication and funding is the delivery of quality water education in an outdoor environment, free of charge to elementary students of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. The 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival had a total of sixteen financial supporters.

Directed funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation made it possible for the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to develop new activity stations, upgrade and provide materials for the Water Hero Challenge and Big Splash Award as well as enhance many existing centres. This included the re-development of several activity centres so they could be self-directed in order to avoid closure if volunteer numbers were down. Non-directed funds from financial supporters enabled the HMKCFW committee to improve volunteer activity centre descriptions, provide volunteer meals and transportation, develop teacher/parent/volunteer guides and communication pieces, produce signage and contributed to the overall successful organization and delivery of the 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival.

The 2019 budget was met through generous financial contributions from HMK Children's Water Festival supporters but fundraising for general operational and delivery costs continues to be challenging for the steering committee. The steering committee will continue to promote involvement for financial support from

municipal governments and organizations in those areas that benefit from water education stemming from the festival but are outside of the Haliburton area; District Municipality of Muskoka and City of Kawartha Lakes. Promotion within Haliburton County will also continue to maintain interest in the event and to increase contributions from businesses. It is necessary for the HMK Children's Water Festival to maintain current fundraising and increase sustainable annual funds to ensure that the quality of this event remains and continues to be free to students. Establishing new funding partners while maintaining already existing financial supporters is essential in furthering a long-term sustainable funding strategy vital to the continued success of this important educational event.

Supporters of the HMK Children's Water Festival were acknowledged in many ways including thank you letters, posting of logos and/or names on the HMK Children's Water Festival website (www.hmwaterfestival.ca), logos and/or names listed on various manuals and publications as well as displayed on a festival on-site sponsor board.

Additional Highlights

Water education at the HMK Children's Water Festival is valued by students and teachers. General feedback and comments provide the committee with annual anecdotal evidence that students who attend the HMKCWF are enjoying themselves while learning about the importance of water and the need for them to become involved and stewards of it. Much of the success of the Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival is due to the facilitation of the activity centres. These facilitators are committed Outside Presenters as well as energetic volunteers. The HMKCWF committee appreciates the time and effort by all of the volunteers but this year, this appreciation was also recognized by a class from Macaulay Public School. Time was taken in class to prepare thank you cards for the volunteers who made these students' experience at the HMK Children's Water Festival memorable. Due to the vast number of volunteers and the different sectors they come from (Trent University, Fleming College, Secondary students, the community and the HMKCWF committee), the students from Macaulay Public School created thank you cards for the main contacts to be shared to individuals by them. These are included in *Appendix 2: Thank You Cards from Macaulay Public School*.

The 2019 Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival was covered in the October 2 edition of the Minden Times and is listed in *Appendix 3: 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings*.

Recommendations

Since 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has been successfully bringing free water education to elementary students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. During this time, there have been some consistent financial supporters but there is a need to expand this list of reliable financial supporters.

The Friends of Ecological and Environmental board and HMK Children's Water Festival committee needs to enhance awareness of the festival, highlighting the importance and significance of youth education, to increase involvement and financial support from all municipal governments whose children participate in the HMK Children's Water Festival.

- **It is recommended to maintain existing financial partnerships and stress the need for their continued support;**

- **It is recommended to enhance awareness of the HMK Children’s Water Festival within Haliburton County and to increase financial support from corporations and businesses within the County;**
- **It is recommended to emphasise an aggressive campaign reaching out to the District of Muskoka and the City of Kawartha Lakes increasing awareness, involvement and financial support of the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended that a long term sustainable fund raising strategy is further developed and implemented using existing documentation as a guide. This should be accomplished in collaboration with the HMK Children’s Water Festival parent organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning.**

The HMK Children’s Water Festival has continued to successfully increase the number of activity stations with a broad range of topics. Developing new activity stations continues to enrich the festival experience and provides a more diverse year-to-year repertoire of stations, sustaining a continued interest with returning students. This strategy also gives opportunity for temporary “retirement” of select activity stations to undergo detailed maintenance.

Facilitation of activity centres is dependent on volunteer participation. Recruitment of community volunteers is year-round but confirmation of student volunteers from Trent, Fleming and secondary leadership classes cannot occur until mid-September after the school year begins. The number of activity centres is provisional on the number of secured volunteers. In 2019, the HMKCWF committee decided to cap the number of owned activity stations to 30 in order to ensure that limited volunteers would be able to properly facilitate these activities. Additional activity centres at the festival include those that can be self-directed and are provided by Outside Presenters.

The HMK Children's Water Festival has been successful in establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations that provide Outside Presenters. These partnerships strengthen the educational component of the festival by increasing the overall diversity of water related messages while accommodating larger numbers of participants. By establishing more partnerships outside of Haliburton County will increase awareness and involvement within other districts included within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area.

- **It is recommended to develop a yearly rotation schedule for activity stations;**
- **It is recommended to continue developing and constructing new activity centres thereby increasing the variety of overall learning stations;**
- **It is recommended that further partnerships with organizations are pursued for donations of new activity centres to the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended to prioritize existing activity stations to undergo detailed maintenance;**
- **It is recommended that further establishment of partnerships with organizations within the District of Muskoka and City of Kawartha Lakes areas to participate as Outside Presenters at the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended to actively maintain and regularly update the newly designed Water Hero website to promote continued engagement of teachers, students and parents;**

The HMK Children’s Water Festival has developed an important partnership with Trent University through U-Links for Community Based Research. This partnership not only provides essential volunteers to deliver activity centres and help the festival run smoothly but it also provides university students a chance to work with community members while receiving hands-on opportunities in environmental education. A similar partnership was initiated with Fleming College in 2016 which increased post-secondary student participation

at the HMKCWF. In 2018, the Youth Leadership in Sustainability Class (Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board) started to participate in the HMK Children's Water Festival by co-facilitating activity centres with Trent students. Working with post-secondary and secondary institutions increases the overall value of the water festival by involving various levels of education in delivering important water stewardship messages. The Haliburton Community has much to offer in terms of volunteers but a "volunteer fatigue" has been experienced for the water festival over the last several years. This year, the community member numbers increased slightly and it is the hope that this will continue. With the addition of secondary student involvement there is increased opportunity for post-secondary and secondary students to work alongside each other as well as community members. Providing this unique mentoring opportunity adds another dimension and benefit to the HMK Children's Water Festival.

- **It is recommended that the partnership with Trent University be continued;**
- **It is recommended that the partnership with Fleming College be continued;**
- **It is recommended that other such partnerships be explored with other educational institutions such as Georgian College and Nippising University in Bracebridge;**
- **It is recommended to maintain the partnership with Kawartha Pine Ridge Leadership in Sustainability Class**
- **It is recommended to re-visit a partnership with the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Leadership Class;**
- **It is recommended to continue building a relationship with the Haliburton Community to maintain and increase volunteer support for future Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festivals;**
- **It is also recommended to continue reaching out to the Muskoka District and City of Kawartha Lakes in order to increase volunteer participation from these areas for future Haliburton-Muskoka Children's Water Festivals.**

It is important to continue advancing educational outreach while maintaining a successful children's water festival as a celebration of water and water education. It is also important to broaden the educational scope of the festival to include those environmental issues that are closely connected to water, such as climate change. In 2019, two activities were developed that related to climate change and it is the intention of the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to continue developing new activity centres in this area in combination with more directed water related activities.

- **It is recommended that the development of activity centres continue to include direct water based issues;**
- **It is recommended that development of activity centres that educate on climate change continues.**

The Water Hero program initiated in 2012 expands the outreach capacity of the HMK Children's Water Festival water education experience and the Water Hero website (www.waterheroes.ca) is a valuable tool for making water education accessible beyond the festival.

Through the U-Links Centre for Community Based Research program, the HMK Children's Water Festival has had several projects completed by students from Trent University. In 2018, Trent students conducted a review of the Water Hero website and provided recommendations to update and improve its usage and relevance.

- **It is recommended that the suggested changes to the Water Hero website be implemented;**

- **It is recommended that the partnership with U-Links Centre for Community Based Research and Trent University be continued and future projects completed, benefiting students of Trent University and the HMK Children’s Water Festival as well as its participants.**

It is important for the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee to outline a more directive strategy to continue with the festival's success, remain viable and achieve sustainability. A strategic and funding plan was drafted in 2011/2012 outlining goals. It is necessary for these to be reviewed and further developed to parallel the overall mandate of the HMK Children's Water Festival and their charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning.

- **It is recommended to review the goals and actions provided within the 2011 HMK Children’s Water Festival strategic plan and the 2012 HMK Children's Water Festival funding strategy and formulate an immediate action plan for future festivals;**
- **It is recommended to develop a long term action plan to ensure continued success and growth of the HMK Children's Water Festival and the water education it provides.**

Conclusion

Since its inception in 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has grown and is a valued and well attended water educational event which now accommodates 1100-1200 elementary children over its 2 day run. This festival delivers high quality water education annually to hundreds of elementary students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. Children learn about water in a fun experiential way, in a natural outdoor setting within a relatively short period of time. It is important that the HMK Children's Water Festival continues its water education and strives to reach beyond the two day event and its participants. Communities need to be aware of the importance of water stewardship and the benefit in working alongside our youth in protecting this essential natural resource.

Water education outreach for the HMK Children's Water Festival was initiated in 2011/2012 with the development, production and distribution of the Teacher's Resource Guide. The Water Hero program continues to motivate students beyond the festival through the on-site Water Hero Challenge and the Big Splash contest.

The Water Hero website has an important role in advancing important educational outreach but needs to be relevant and easy to use, therefore should be a priority going forward into 2020.

There is still a need to address the challenges of raising funds, revitalizing committee members and securing overall sustainability. Developing and strengthening long term financial partnerships are necessary in ensuring that the HMK Children’s Water Festival continues to provide free, high quality water education to our children through fun and interactive learning experiences. In doing so, the festival will continue fostering awareness of the importance of water, healthy water systems, it’s interconnectedness to other environmental issues and in the long run, will better our communities and help us live healthier lives.

Appendix 2: Thank You Cards from Macaulay Public School



Dear, Irene heaven, I wanted to thank you for making some amazing activities and games. I learnt a lot about the water and tiny little creatures in the water that you don't even see when you're scuba diving, swimming, or under water adventures. I wonder how you all found thoughts insects? Some are probably on the sea floor. I think my favourite station was the one where your support to get the mar ball in the right ocean or lake in Canada and one thing I forgot to say in the beginning was that everything was organized for everybody who came. Also thank you to the volunteers who volunteered to help people learn and have fun but back to the important stuff the one thing I learnt that I never knew was that there was so much cool insects in the water. Thank you for teaching me awesome and new things!

Sincerely grace

Dear: Jean-Francois Kaprivnjak,
Thank you for help the Trent
University students and giving
Them a good education.
Your the reason why it
was really Successful fun
and educational. The water
festival was an awesome
fun filled experience for
everyone and we won't forget
it.

from: mB. Wheeler's class



Dear MR Rick Whittcker,

We are Thanking you because
we really enjoyed The water
festival. it was so much fun we
know that the water festival would
not have been possible without the
flaming college students.

From Mrs Wheeler's 5/6 class

Dear Mr. Douglas,
I Wanted to thank-you for helping with
the water festival and bringing the
youth leadership in sus tainability KPR
class. What I liked about the water
festival was there were so many choices
for stuff to do. Some thing I would
change is each group goes to a certain
station first so that way everyone
gets to do some thing. but other then
that it was amazing.

Sincerely,

Savana

Dear DANIELA pagliaro
Thank you for organizing
the community volunteers!. A
thing I liked about the water
festival is the hunt to find
the water drops and I liked
the thing where you had to
put the fire out.

Sincerely MS Wheeler's
CLASS 5/6

Appendix 3: 2019 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings

Young water stewards

Minden Times (pg3), October 2, 2019.